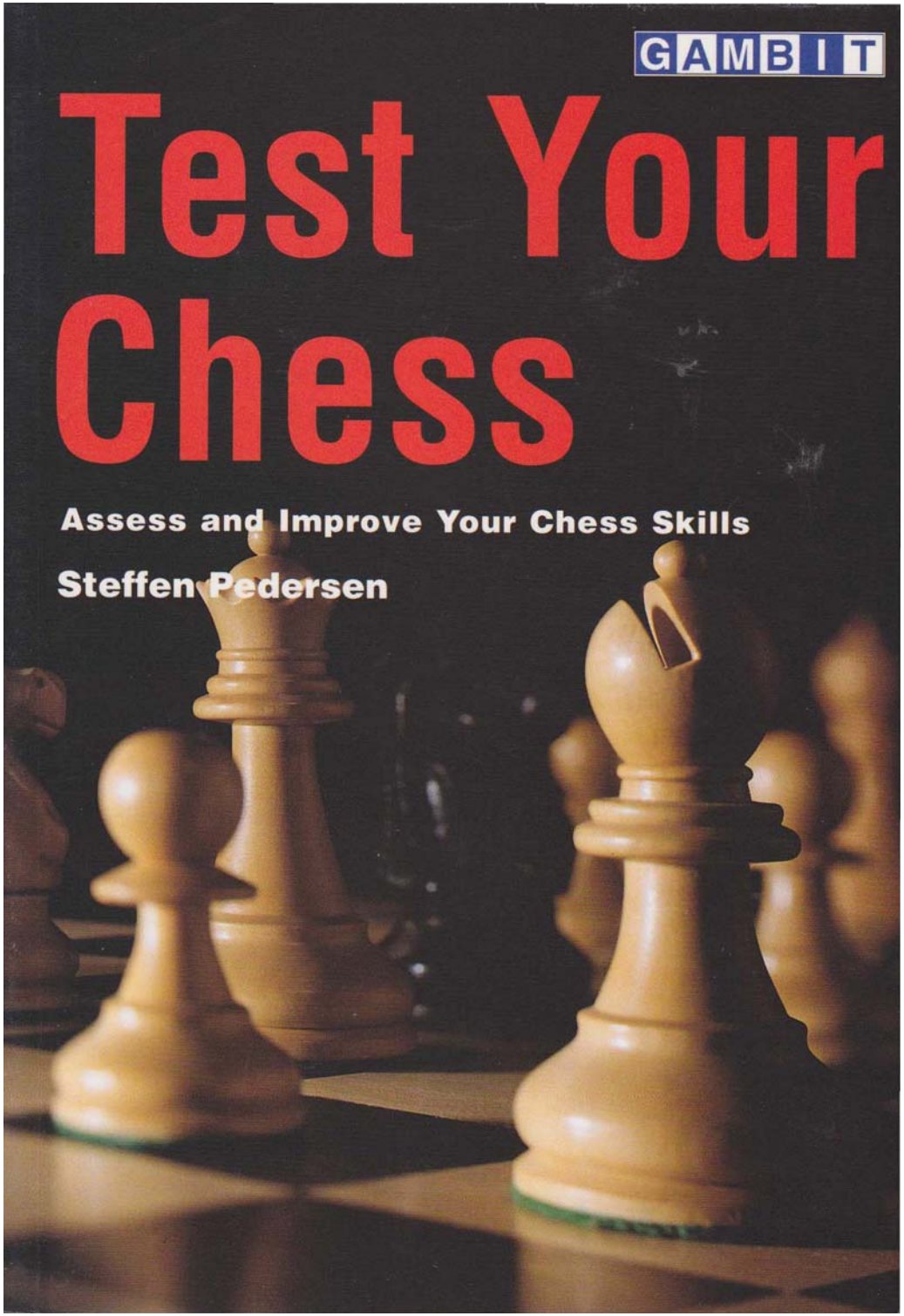
GAMBIT

Test Your Chess

Assess and Improve Your Chess Skills

Steffen Pedersen



GAMBIT

This book offers a variety of entertaining and thought-provoking exercises in fundamental chess skills. It will help players of all standards to identify strengths and pinpoint areas of their play that need more attention.

The first half of the book tests your ability in each part of the game. Opening Exercises test your ability to develop harmoniously and to find creative solutions in the first part of the game. The middlegame section assesses your proficiency at making decisions relating to attack and defence, prophylactic thinking and finding the correct plan. The endgame challenges focus on the basic essential knowledge that often decides real-life games.

The second half of the book is comprised of 'How Good is Your Chess' exercises, where you are asked to follow one side through a complete game, trying to guess each move as if you were playing a real game. Points are awarded according to the accuracy of your decisions.

Full, detailed solutions are given to all exercises.

Steffen Pedersen is a young international master from Denmark. He scored a grandmaster norm when he was 16, and played in several World and European junior championships. In 1998 he was joint winner of the Hampstead Grandmaster tournament, and achieved another grandmaster norm at the Aars get2net Cup in 1999. He has written several highly-regarded opening books, with subjects including the Dutch Defence, Sicilian Scheveningen, Benko Gambit and the Semi-Slav.

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Gambit Publications Ltd
69 Masbro Road, Kensington, London W14 0LS, England.
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http://www.gambitbooks.com

£13.99 $19.95

ISBN 1-901983-35-8

9 781901 983357

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First published in the UK by Gambit Publications Ltd 2000

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A copy of the British Library Cataloguing in Publication data is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 901983 35 8

DISTRIBUTION:
Worldwide (except USA): Central Books Ltd, 99 Wallis Rd, London E9 5LN.
Tel +44 (0)20 8986 4854 Fax +44 (0)20 8533 5821.
E-mail: orders@Centralbooks.com
USA: BHB International, Inc., 41 Monroe Turnpike, Trumbull, CT 06611, USA.

For all other enquiries (including a full list of all Gambit Chess titles) please contact the publishers, Gambit Publications Ltd, 69 Masbro Rd, Kensington, London W14 0LS. Fax +44 (0)20 7371 1477.
E-mail Murray@gambitchess.freeserve.co.uk
Or visit the GAMBIT web site at http://www.gambitbooks.com

Edited by Graham Burgess
Typeset by Petra Nunn
Printed in Great Britain by Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wilts.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Managing Director: GM Murray Chandler
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Symbols

+	check	Wch	world championship
++	double check	Ech	European championship
#	checkmate	Wcht	World Team Championship
!!	brilliant move	ECC	European Clubs Cup
!	good move	Ct	candidates event
!?	interesting move	IZ	interzonal event
?!	dubious move	Z	zonal event
?	bad move	OL	olympiad
??	blunder	jr	junior event
+–	White is winning	wom	women's event
±	White is much better	mem	memorial event
±	White is slightly better	rpd	rapidplay game
=	equal position	corr.	correspondence game
∓	Black is slightly better	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
∓	Black is much better	½-½	the game ends in a draw
–+	Black is winning	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
Ch	championship	(*n*)	*n*th match game
Cht	team championship	(*D*)	see next diagram
tt	team tournament	* * * *	Guess the next move

Introduction

This book features a variety of exercises to test your assessment, decision-making and analytical skills. The principal aim is to help you identify areas of your game that need work, and to know your areas of strength, so you can steer your games towards them. There is also an element of self-assessment. Although the conversions from points score to rating should be taken with a large pinch of salt, they should give a useful indication. For instance, if you have never been to a chess club and achieve an "IM/GM" score in the tests, you should definitely consider taking your chess more seriously!

This is the first time I have written a non-openings book, so for me writing this book has been quite a challenge. I hope that players of a wide variety of strengths will find the material useful.

Selecting the material, particularly for the first three chapters, was a difficult task. What would be useful? In the end, I decided on only a few themes within the chapters on the opening, middlegame and endgame. The second part of the book contains 16 games annotated in the well-known 'How Good is Your Chess?' style, in which you are awarded points for finding the right moves.

How to solve the tests

Since there are separate guidelines for solving the 'How Good is Your Chess?' exercises, I'll only deal with the tests in the first three chapters here. Each position should be thoroughly analysed. There is no specific time-limit as such; you should analyse until you consider that further work will not improve your answer. I recommend that you write down your analyses and thoughts on a piece of paper before turning to the solutions. While a significant proportion of the points are for finding the best move in each diagram position, there are also many more points available for seeing critical ideas further down the main lines. At the end of Chapter 4, you can write in the points you earn in each test, and see how your points total converts (very approximately) to a playing strength.

Steffen Pedersen
Ellested, Denmark, September 2000

1 The Opening

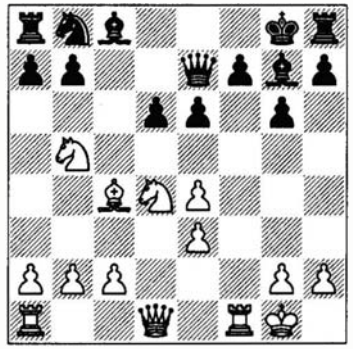
The tendency among many players (ranging from ordinary club level to grandmasters) is to devote the lion's share of their study time to working on the opening. With the help of analysis modules and computer databases, preparing one's openings has become a lot easier, simultaneously making the opening of even greater importance. Nowadays it is possible to prepare to play an opening line in less than an hour by rapidly skimming through a number of games on the computer, perhaps with the aim of surprising an opponent in a tournament game.

The tests contained in this chapter are not meant to see whether you have done your opening preparation well enough. Nor do they test you in a specific opening. Rather, I have chosen one subject that I have observed many club players find difficult to handle: an advantage in development. There are five test positions on that theme; then the chapter is rounded off with tests related to a number of other opening topics.

Advantage in Development

There are various types of advantage that can be accumulated during the opening. Some are quite concrete but others are only temporary, and may vanish if one doesn't follow up energetically. A good example is an advantage in development. It is a type of advantage you frequently obtain but it is not always possible to exploit it if you cannot transform it into another type of advantage. Time is inevitably on your opponent's side, so the way to maintain and exploit an advantage in development is by playing as energetically as possible. In the following tests, try to find the best way to exploit an advantage in development.

Test 1.1



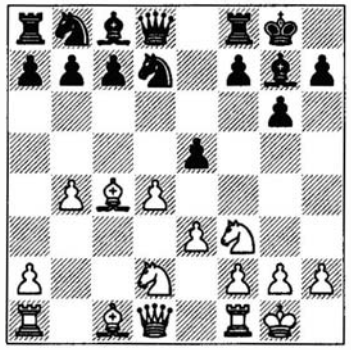
White to move.

Test 1.2

White to move.

White's advantage in development is not much to speak of at the moment, but he may be able to develop with gain of tempo or provoke weaknesses in Black's position. Can you find a good plan for White?

Test 1.3



White to move.

The game started out as a Queen's Gambit Accepted but now resembles a Grünfeld. Black has just struck in the centre but lags behind in development. However, White must be quick to exploit this advantage. How would you continue?

Test 1.4

White to move.

White's advantage in development is minimal in this case: essentially, he has just preserved the advantage of having moved first. However, in some positions this is enough to put Black under pressure. How can White exploit Black's extravagancy of developing his queenside first?

Test 1.5

White to move.

White has a lead in development. How can he exploit this advantage?

Bits and Pieces

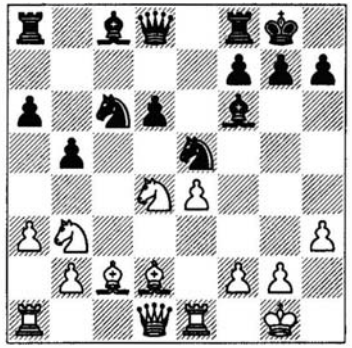
The next section is a selection of random tests to keep you on your guard in various types of opening positions.

Test 1.6

Black to move.

In this quiet position Black must find a plan. Which of the following moves would you choose: 13...h6, 13...b5, 13...♗g4, 13...♗b6 or 13...♗c7 ?

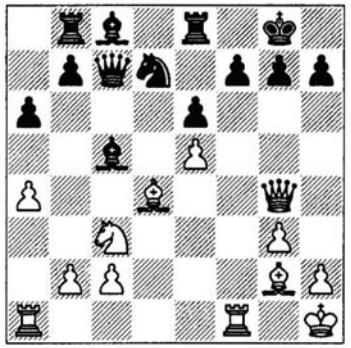
Test 1.7



Black to move.

White's last move (17 ♗c1-d2) intends to neutralize the power of the f6-bishop. How should Black react?

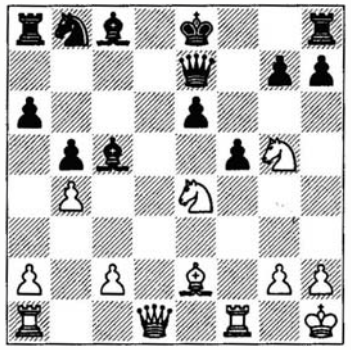
Test 1.8



White to move.

In this sharp Scheveningen Sicilian, Black has just played 16...♗e7-c5, with the aim of increasing the pressure on e5. How should White respond?

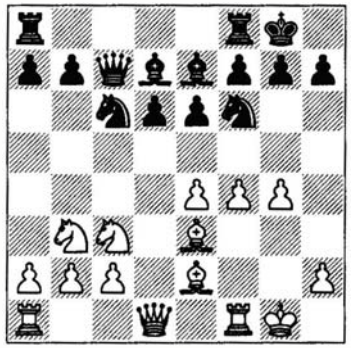
Test 1.9



Black to move.

Black has just been surprised by 17 b2-b4!?, a new move. Previously, White had tried 17 ♗h5+ g6 18 ♘xh7 ♔f7 19 ♘hg5+ ♔g7 20 ♘xc5 ♕xc5 21 ♗f3 in Plaskett-Gallagher, Telford 1982, when Black should have played 21...♖a7 with a small advantage. What is White's idea with 17 b4, and how should Black react?

Test 1.10



Black to move.

Test 1.11

Black to move.

Both sides suffer from an isolated pawn. White is ready to target the c6-pawn with, for example, 17 ♖c3 or 17 ♖c1, and could be better unless Black finds a way to disturb White in the process of his plan. How would you continue?

2 The Middlegame

The middlegame is of course a vast subject, and also the best served by traditional chess puzzle books, which require you to find a combination, or some piece of tactics. In Chapter 5 of this book, you will find 16 'How Good is Your Chess?' exercises, in which middlegame decision-making and planning feature prominently. This short chapter features exercises on two topics: the famous Greek Gift idea, and various questions of Attack and Defence.

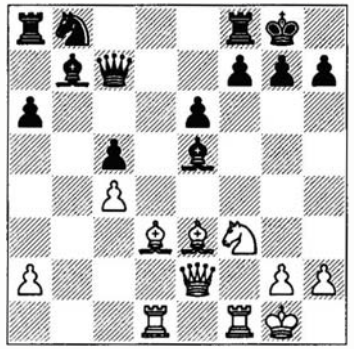
The Greek Gift

One of the most common middlegame sacrifices is the one where White plays ♗xh7+ (or Black plays ...♗xh2+), generally known as the Greek Gift. Usually this sacrifice is followed by ♘g5+, and White hopes to follow up by either delivering mate or gaining a substantial amount of material. Quite often though, the sacrifice doesn't lead to direct mate and White has to work out a creative way of keeping the attack going. In this section I have chosen a list of positions where your task is to analyse and evaluate the ♗xh7+ sacrifice (in Test 2.4, it is Black playing ...♗xh2+ you are invited to analyse).

Test 2.1

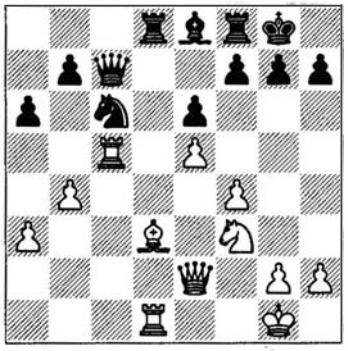
White to move.

Test 2.2



White to move.

Test 2.3



White to move.

Test 2.4

White to move.

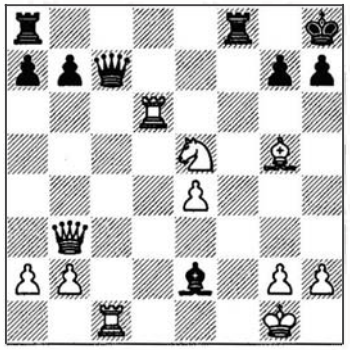
Attack and Defence

Much has been written about the attack in chess. It is one of the most difficult aspects of the game to handle correctly. Attacking well often involves a fine blend between intuitive decision-making and accurately calculating lengthy variations.

Defence, on the other hand, can rarely be played intuitively. It requires one to determine exactly what the opponent threatens and subsequently to react in the right way.

In this section, there are a number of positions that feature questions of attack and defence. In each test you should analyse the position as well as you can, and again you will be awarded points for how much you have seen.

Test 2.5



White to move.

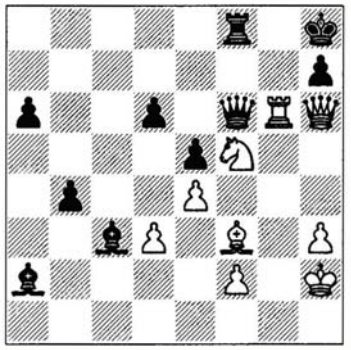
White is a piece up but his rook is under attack, and there is a danger of mate on the back rank. How does White solve all his problems?

Test 2.6

Black to move.

Black has won an exchange but is faced by the deadly threat of White playing 24 ♖d8+ followed by mate on g7. Can you find a good defence for Black?

Test 2.7



Black to move.

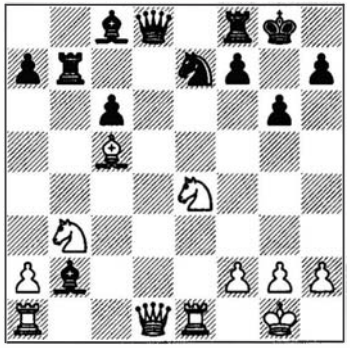
White's last move, 40 ♖g1-g6, was tricky. Can you find the correct defence?

Test 2.8

Black to move.

Black has built up a menacing position with White's king being chased into the epicentre of the attack, but is it now all going to backfire? The queen is threatened, and if it moves the bishop falls. How should Black continue?

Test 2.9

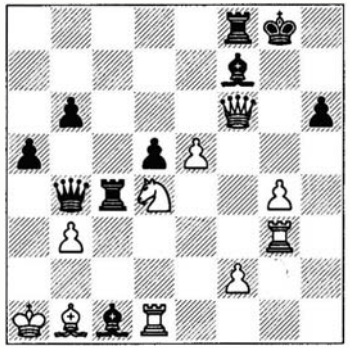


White to move.

Black has just captured a pawn on b2. 16 ♖b1 ♕xd1 17 ♖bxd1 is feasible

but far from convincing. Can you see another way to continue the attack?

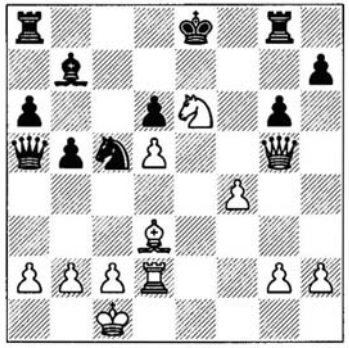
Test 2.10



White to move.

We are at the climax of an incredibly complicated game. Black's last move, 33...♗a3-c1, threatened mate in two but White is also only a few moves away from victory. What should be the result?

Test 2.11



White to move.

This position is from a 6 ♗g5 Najdorf where White has sacrificed a whole rook for an attack, and could have arisen in Velimirović-Ljubojević, Yugoslav Ch (Umag) 1972, if Black's last move had been 18...♘d7-c5 (rather than 18...♘f8?). Analyse the consequences of 19 ♘xc5!.

Test 2.12

White to move.

Black's last move, 13...♘f6-e8, was by many considered a brilliant defence. Do you agree?

3 The Endgame

With chess-players of all levels, the amount of interest in the endgame varies greatly from player to player. Some consider it absolutely essential to have thorough endgame knowledge. Others find it just a waste of time, with a "I am not getting to the endgame anyway" attitude. My opinion is that the endgame is indeed very important. I find it very annoying to waste a hard-earned advantage by poor endgame play, but also equally pleasing to be able to survive inferior endings, most likely after struggling the whole game.

This is a book of exercises, not of lessons, so I have limited myself to sections on the following subjects:

- Pawn Endings
- Opposite-Coloured Bishops
- Rook Endings
- How Good is Your Technique?

In each section you will find a number of tests. Analyse the positions as thoroughly as possible. You will be awarded points according to how well you solve the tests.

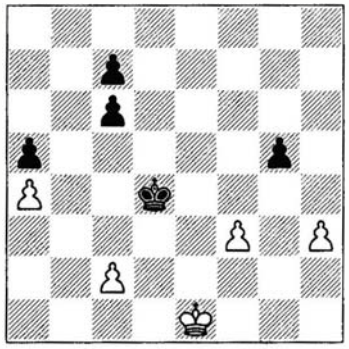
Pawn Endings

Test 3.1

White to move.

Black is slightly better due to his 2 vs 1 majority on the queenside and the possibility of White's d-pawn becoming weak. White decided to bail out with **35 ♕c3+ ♕xc3+ 36 ♔xc3**. Analyse the resulting pawn ending.

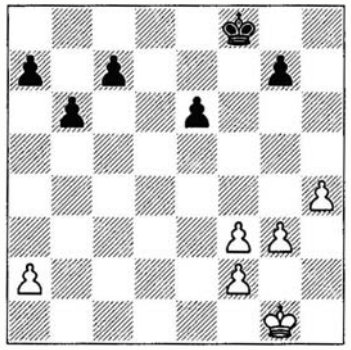
Test 3.2



White to move.

White can create an outside passed pawn, but is this going to be enough to win?

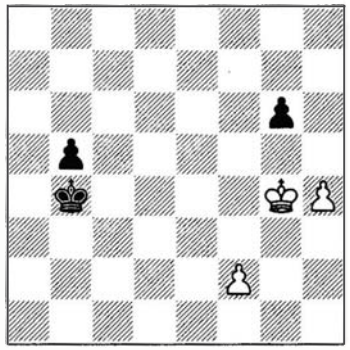
Test 3.3



Black to move.

Black has a 3 vs 1 majority on the queenside. It is clear that White is somewhat handicapped by his doubled f-pawns but can Black make use of his queenside majority? This would require assistance from the black king. Can you find the correct plan for Black?

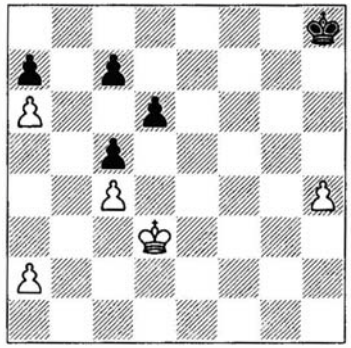
Test 3.4



White to move.

This looks like it should be a relatively simple ending but it does involve a little subtlety. Can you find a way for White to draw?

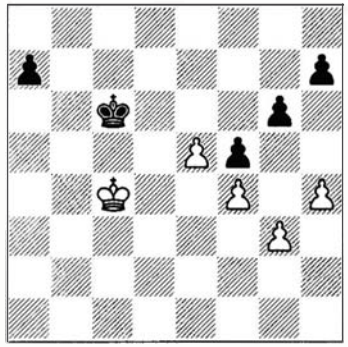
Test 3.5



White to move.

This 1956 study by Chekhover contains a few surprising turns. Apparently it seems that White has little chance of saving the position, as Black can simply walk his king up to the white h-pawn and create a protected passed pawn by means of ...c6 and ...d5. But is it really that simple?

Test 3.6



White to move.

This position was used by Fine in 1941 to show the strength of the protected passed pawn. Fine originally thought that White was winning easily but this met with criticism from some theoreticians. White is indeed winning but it is not as easy as Fine thought. Your task is to analyse the position, but be careful to do this as accurately as possible. You will also get points for finding the best defence for Black.

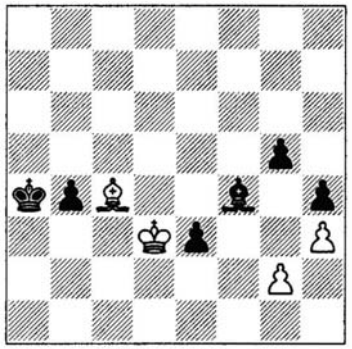
Opposite-Coloured Bishops

Endings with opposite-coloured bishops are often drawish by nature but trickier than they appear at first sight. The two most important elements of opposite-coloured bishops are *the blockade* and *passed pawns*.

With the two sides operating on different colours, a blockade is often unbreakable, and hence the defending side can sometimes hold endings two or more pawns down. In turn, the attacking side may need to sacrifice material (pawns or even the bishop) to create a second passed pawn, so as to overload the enemy bishop. Two widely-separated passed pawns generally cause a bishop more trouble than pawns that are closer together, since the bishop will then need to operate along two diagonals at the same time.

In the following tests, you are invited to analyse the positions as thoroughly as possible. You are given points for how well you solve the positions.

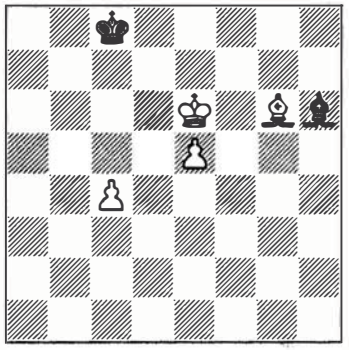
Test 3.7



White to move.

Black is two pawns up, but will this be enough to ensure the win?

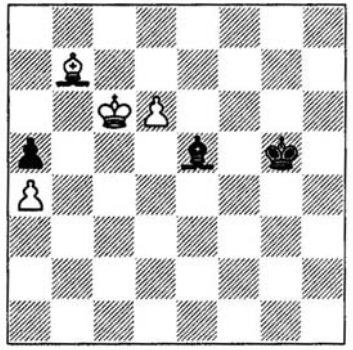
Test 3.8



Black to move.

With the white pawns so close together, it really should be possible to set up a blockade, shouldn't it?

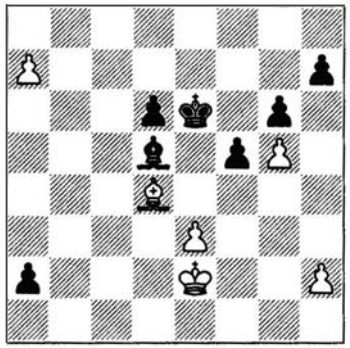
Test 3.9



Black to move.

If his king were a little closer, it would be a simple task for Black to draw this position, but how does he cope with the threat of White playing d7-d8♕?

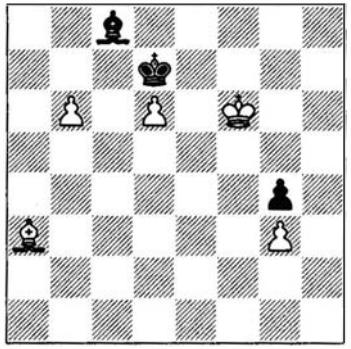
Test 3.10



Black to move.

Black is one pun up but is this going to be enough?

Test 3.11



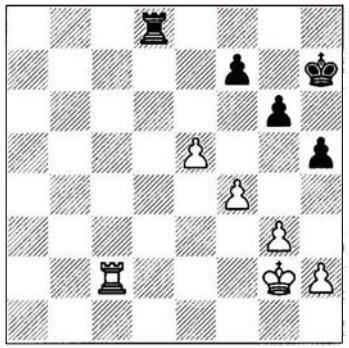
Black to move.

It is imperative for Black to prevent White's king from coming to e7, because White would then be able to sacrifice his b- or d-pawn in order to advance the other one. There are two possible defences for Black, 84...♗b7 and 84...♔d8. Analyse and assess the consequences of both.

Rook Endings

Of all types of ending, rook endings occur most frequently in practice, yet they are also very often misplayed. In this section I have chosen to concentrate exclusively on endings where one side is one pawn or more up. Rook endings have a well-known drawish tendency, and an extra pawn is no guarantee of victory.

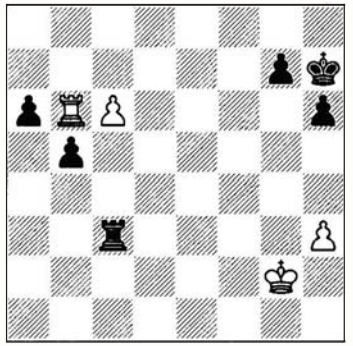
Test 3.12



Black to move.

We begin with a fairly topical example. The position arose in the second game of the KasparovChess Grand Prix final between Piket and Kasparov. After exerting pressure throughout the game, Piket had to content himself with the above ending. The ending is drawn but White can try to move his king up to g5 and try to engineer breaks such as e6 or f5. Here is how the game concluded: **41...♖d3 42 ♔h3 ♖e3 43 ♔h4 ♔g7 44 ♔g5 ♖e1 45 ♖c7 ♖e2 46 ♖e7 ♖a2 47 f5 gxf5 48 e6 h4 49 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 50 ♔f6 1-0**. Can you improve on Black's play and consequently do better than Kasparov? (You may play through this sequence, but should not move the pieces otherwise.)

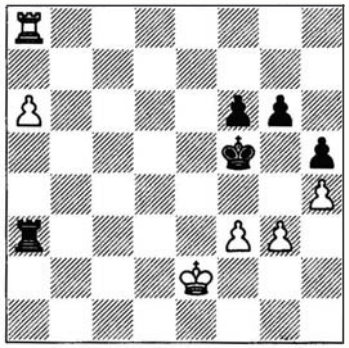
Test 3.13



Black to move.

Black is two pawns up but White's c-pawn gives him strong counterplay. White hopes that he will be able to swap his c-pawn for Black's a- and b-pawns, thus reaching a drawn 2 vs 1 ending on the kingside. How can Black avoid this?

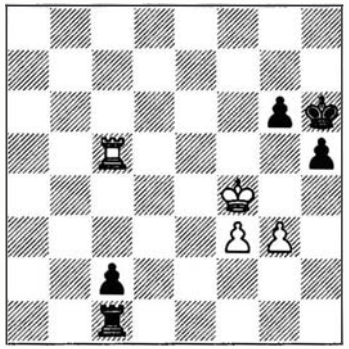
Test 3.14



White to move.

This is a typical 4 vs 3 endgame with a passed a-pawn. Is this one just a dead draw?

Test 3.15



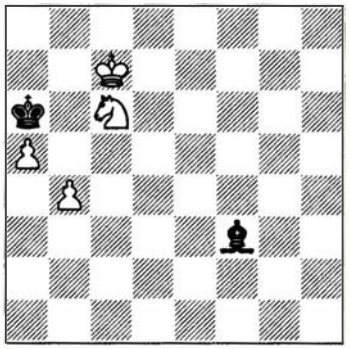
White to move.

White's rook is actively placed to cope with Black's c-pawn but White's king must stay sheltered from rook checks. How should White defend?

How Good is Your Technique?

Nothing is more annoying than having a material advantage and failing to convert it into victory. I have selected three exercises, where the common theme is that the superior side can win, but there are some technical difficulties that must be overcome.

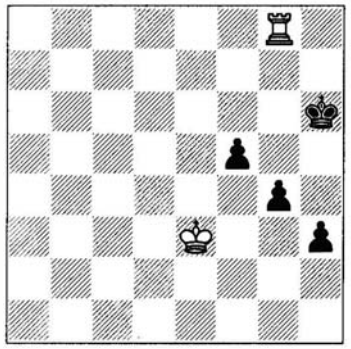
Test 3.16



White to move.

With two extra pawns the win does not appear to be a problem, but watch out, as sometimes Black can even sacrifice his bishop to reach a theoretically drawn position with knight and pawn vs bare king where White is unable to win a tempo with his knight.

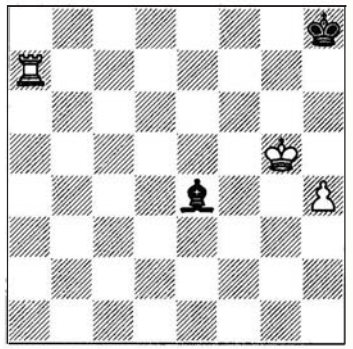
Test 3.17



White to move.

Why shouldn't the rook just outclass the pawns? They are already almost blockaded.

Test 3.18



White to move.

This would be an easy win for White if Black instead had a dark-squared bishop. However, with the h8-corner being of the opposite colour to the bishop, there are some stalemate ideas that White should watch out for.

4 Solutions for Chapters 1-3

The Opening

Advantage in Development

Test 1.1

Zlotnik – Gik
Dubna 1968

White has a large lead in development but there is a clear danger of this fading unless he can engineer a quick attack.

13 ♘xd6

3 points if this was your choice. White immediately exploits the poor coordination between Black's pieces. Obviously the d6-pawn is a weakness but, for example, 13 ♘f3 or 13 ♘b3 (1 point for each) would be much less convincing. Black need not bother about the pawn and would simply continue 13...♘c6. Black's firm control of e5 makes his position solid enough to withstand the temporary pressure.

13...♕xd6 14 ♘xe6

Add 2 more points if this was your idea.

14...♕xe6?!

This is an unsuccessful attempt to escape with three pieces for the queen. 14...♕b6 can be met by 15 ♘c7 or 15 ♘g5.

14...♗e5 is objectively best; then White must play accurately to maintain an advantage. 5 points if you intended to reply 15 ♕xd6 (15 ♘g5 ♕xd1 16 ♖axd1 ♔g7 is not at all convincing) 15...♗xd6 16 ♘d8! (this is much more accurate than 16 ♘g5, when Black holds on with 16...♘c6!) 16...♗e6 (now 16...♘c6 is met by 17 ♘xc6 bxc6 18 ♖xf7) 17 ♗xe6! fxe6 18 ♖ad1 ♗e7 19 ♘xe6! ♘c6 20 ♖d7 with excellent compensation for the piece.

After the text-move, the win is straightforward:

15 ♕d8+ ♗f8 16 ♖xf7! ♔xf7 17 ♕xc8 ♕xc4 18 ♕xc4+ ♔g7 19 ♕d4+ 1-0

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 1.2

Kalinin – Jonkman
Haarlem 1996

1 ♘h4!

5 points. The b5-pawn is Black's prime concern. Moving it would terribly weaken the queenside, and in particular the c4-square. The text-move offers to exchange the light-squared bishops, a deal that is definitely worthwhile for White, since Black will then be unable to maintain his pawn on b5. Of the alternatives, 1 ♘e1 (1 point) is similar but not quite as aggressive, and 1 ♘a3 allows Black to maintain the pawn on b5, viz. 1...♕b7 2 ♘h4 ♘d5!.

1...♘d5

Understandably, Black attempts to avoid moving the b-pawn but now White exploits his lead in development with a series of energetic moves. Objectively, 1...♗xg2 2 ♘xg2 ♕c6 3 ♘a3 b4 4 ♘c4, with an edge for White, is best.

2 ♘c3! ♕b7?!

2...b4 3 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 4 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 is Black's best try. Then 5 ♕xd5 exd5 is fine for Black but White can keep an advantage with 5 ♕a4 or 5 ♕c2 followed by ♘g2-e3.

3 ♘xd5 exd5

3...♗xd5 4 ♗xd5 exd5 5 ♘f5 gives Black similar problems to those in the game.

4 ♘f5 g6 5 ♘h6 ♗g7 6 e4!

With Black's king caught in the middle of the board, White is eager to open the centre.

6...c4 7 ♕b4 ♗f8

This is not a very good move, but it is not easy to suggest an alternative. 7...dxe4 is probably best but can be strongly answered by 8 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 9 ♖e1, when after the further moves 9...f5 10 dxe4 fxe4 11 ♕d6 ♘e5 12 ♕e6+ ♕e7 13 ♕c8+ ♕d8 14 ♕b7! White is much better.

8 ♕c3 f6 9 exd5 ♗xd5 10 ♖e1+ ♗e7 11 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 12 dxc4 bxc4 13 ♘g4 ♕c5 14 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 15 ♕xf6 ♖f8 16 ♗e3! ♕b4 17 ♗d2!

A final finesse, leading to a winning king and pawn ending.

17...♕c5 18 ♖xe7+ ♕xe7 19 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 20 ♗b4+ ♔e8 21 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 22 ♔g2 1-0

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 1.3

Neverov – Karpeshov
St Petersburg 1997

White might be able to retain a small advantage with 9 ♗b2 exd4 10 ♗xd4 (2 points if this was your idea). For example, after 10...♗xd4 11 ♘xd4 ♘e5 12 ♗e2 ♘bc6 13 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 14 b5 Black's problems are not over yet. However, much stronger is...

9 ♗a3!

4 points if you intended this, which to a much larger extent nails down on the weaknesses left behind by Black's 8th move, 8...e7-e5?.

9...exd4

If 9...♖e8, 10 ♕b3 gives Black considerable trouble.

10 b5!

This is a lot stronger than 10 ♘xd4. 2 points if this was your plan. Now 10...dxe3 11 fxe3 ♗xa1 (Black is tied up after 11...♕e8 12 ♕b3) 12 ♕xa1 is much too dangerous for Black, who will really suffer due to his lack of development. Nor was the game continuation very cheerful for Black...

10...♖e8 11 ♕b3 ♕f6 12 exd4!

To keep up the pressure White opens the e-file. 12 ♘xd4 is much tamer.

12...a6

There isn't anything better. Khuzman gives the amusing line 12...♘b6 13 ♖fe1 ♖xe1+ 14 ♖xe1 ♗d7 15 ♘e4 ♕f5 16 ♘g3 ♕f6 17 ♗e7! ♕f4 18 ♗g5 and White wins.

13 ♖fe1 ♖xe1+ 14 ♖xe1 axb5 15 ♖e8+ ♘f8

15...♗f8 16 ♗xb5 ♘c6 17 ♗xc6 bxc6 18 ♘e5 +–.

16 ♘e4 ♕f4 17 ♗xf7+ ♕xf7 18 ♘f6+! 1-0

Maximum: 6 points.

Test 1.4

Hübner – Miles

Havana 1998

9 cxb5! axb5 10 a4

In this way White really puts the question to Black's queenside. He will now be punished for his premature advance on that side, but note that he only suffers because he is underdeveloped on the kingside. 5 points if you decided on this way of breaking up the queenside pawns.

10...b4

Understandably, Black attempts to keep the position closed. This is a common strategy when lagging slightly behind in development. It would be easier for White to exploit his advantage in development in an open position. Hence, Black refrains from 10...bxa4 11 ♖xa4 ♘d7 12 ♖xa8+ ♗xa8 13 ♕a4 followed by ♗b5 and ♘c4, with terrific pressure.

11 ♗b5+ ♘d7 12 ♘c4 ♕c7 13 a5!

This very fine move makes it possible to create a knight outpost on b6.

13...♖a7

Objectively speaking, Black must play 13...♔d8 to stop White occupying b6, as in the game. Then White can win an exchange with 14 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 15 ♘b6 but after 15...♕g4/15...♕e7 16 ♘xa8 ♕xe4+, Black at least gets a pawn in return. However, the simple 14 0-0! is much more awkward for Black.

14 ♘b6 ♗c8 15 ♘d4!

This knight is immune due to the c-file being fatally opened in the event of 15...cxd4.

15...♖b7 16 ♘xc8 ♕xc8 17 a6 ♖a7 18 ♘c6 ♖a8 19 a7

White has a completely winning position. Here is the remainder of the game:

19...♘b6 20 ♘xb4+

20 ♘a5+!? ♔d8 21 ♗a6 ♕d7 22 ♗b7 +– is another amusing variation.

20...♔d8 21 ♘c6+ ♔c7 22 0-0 1-0

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 1.5

Chatalbashev – Todorov

Krynica Z 1998

12 c5!

5 points if you chose this aggressive continuation, which is the only way White can exploit his advantage in development. Black would be doing fine if he were allowed to play ...c5 himself. Now he cannot keep the position closed.

12...dxc5

Or:

a) 12...exd4 13 cxd6 cxd6 14 ♘b3 and White regains his pawn with a positional advantage.

b) 12...♗e7 13 c6! ♗xc6 14 ♕c2 +–.

13 dxe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 15 ♘c4 ♕e6 16 ♘a5

3 more points if this move was part of your plans when you decided on 12 c5!. Without it, White's idea would lose much of its point.

16...♕b6

If 16...♗c8, White improves his position significantly with 17 ♗c4.

17 ♘xb7 ♕xb7 18 e5!

Of course White mustn't lose momentum.

18...♗e7 19 e6!

19 ♗e4 c6 20 ♕f3 ♖c8 21 e6 is also good.

19...0-0-0 20 exf7

Black has escaped without material bruises but he is dead lost anyway. This is a nice example of opposite-coloured bishops favouring the attacker. The game concluded:

20...♗f6 21 ♕e2 ♔b8

21...♖d6 22 ♕e8+ ♖d8 23 ♕xh8! +–.

22 ♗xa6 ♕d5 23 ♕b5+ ♔a7 24 ♕a5 ♕d6 25 ♖e6! 1-0

Maximum: 8 points.

Bits and Pieces

Test 1.6

Averbakh – Keres

USSR Ch (Moscow) 1950

The majority of the suggested moves would allow White to retain a small advantage with 14 h3 or 14 ♗e3. However, White's last move (13 ♖f1-e1) is unfortunate in the sense that in many lines White cannot recapture with cxd4 if Black exchanges on d4, because of the pin from the bishop on a5. Hence, the right continuation is...

13...♗g4!

3 points. An excellent plan: Black simply intends to exchange on f3 followed by taking on d4, while 14...♘h4 could also be annoying.

14 ♘f5!?

White activates his knight but also ensures that he can play ♘xd4 if Black exchanges on d4. Another interesting idea is 14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♕xf3 exd4 16 b4 ♗b6 17 ♗g5, when in return for a pawn White has some attacking prospects, but Black's resources are sufficient: 17...♘e5 (17...♖e5 allows White to increase the pressure with 18 ♘f5) 18 ♕f5 and now 18...♘ed7 19 e5!? dxe5 20 ♘h5 h6 21 ♗h4 looks slightly awkward for Black, but he can probably continue with 21...♔f8!?, intending 22...g6. Furthermore, Black can circumvent this problem by playing 18...h6 19 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 20 ♕xf6 gxf6, when White's compensation is inadequate.

14...d5

2 points if you had anticipated 14 ♘f5!? and intended to meet it with this or 14...exd4 15 ♘5xd4 d5!. In fact, the latter is probably more accurate, as it avoids White's possibility we discuss in the next note, and after 16 exd5 (16 h3 ♗xf3 17 ♕xf3 ♘xe4 18 ♗xe4 transposes to the main line) 16...♕xd5 17 ♗e3 ♘h4 Black is better.

15 h3

15 ♗g5!? is a major alternative:

a) 15...h6? is wrong, because of 16 ♗xh6 ♗xf3 17 ♕xf3 gxh6 18 ♘xh6+ ♔g7 19 ♘f5+ ♔g8 20 exd5 with a promising attack.

b) 15...dxe4 16 ♗xe4 h6 17 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 is feasible but not totally convincing. White plays 18 ♕c2 and avoids ending up with either a doubled or an isolated pawn.

c) The complications after 15...exd4 16 ♕xd4 ♗b6 seem to give Black the

best chance for an advantage, but they must be carefully calculated. A sample line: 17 ♗xf6 gxf6 18 ♕d2 (18 ♕d3 dxe4! 19 ♕xd8 ♖axd8 20 ♗xe4 ♖xe4! 21 ♘h6+ ♔g7 22 ♖xe4 ♗c8 23 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 24 ♖ae1 ♗f5 ∓; 18 ♘h6+ ♔g7 19 ♕d2 ♗xf3 20 gxf3 dxe4 21 ♘f5+ ♔h8 22 ♕h6 ♖g8 23 ♗xe4 ♕f8 ∓) 18...♗xf5 19 exf5 ♘e5, and Black is very slightly better.

15...♗xf3 16 ♕xf3 ♘xe4 17 ♗xe4 exd4 18 ♘xd4 ♗b6!

An instructive finesse, leaving White with no way to avoid an isolated pawn.

19 ♗d2 dxe4 20 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 21 ♕xe4 ♗xd4 22 cxd4 ♕e7 23 ♕g4 ♕d6

Black is better, and went on to win in 58 moves.

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 1.7

Tal – Keres

Curaçao Ct 1962

17...♘xd4 18 ♘xd4

Now if Black continues casually with something like 18...♘c4, White does indeed look better after 19 ♗c3, as the backward d-pawn is a major concern for Black. However, White's 17th move had a large disadvantage: it obstructed the d-file. Hence...

18...♘d3!

3 points. This is a fairly logical move, but a certain number of tactics need to have been carefully calculated to justify it.

19 ♘c6

This is critical. Black is slightly better after 19 ♗xd3 ♗xd4, followed by ...♕f6, or 19 ♗a5 ♕xa5 20 ♕xd3 g6.

19...♘xf2!

2 points if you had this one prepared. White is better after something like 19...♕b6?! 20 ♗xd3 ♕xc6 21 ♖c1.

20 ♕f3

20 ♕h5, toying with ideas of a timely e5, is probably more accurate. For example, after 20...♕b6 21 e5! ♘e4+ 22 ♔h2 g6 23 exf6! gxh5 24 ♗xe4, White has excellent compensation. Fortunately, Black seems to have a safe line in 20...♘xh3+ 21 ♔h2 g6! 22 ♕f3 (the only reasonable move; 22 ♕d5 ♕d7, intending ...♗b7, is very good for Black) 22...♗e5+!, which is the same as the main line, except that Black's g-pawn is on g6. This does not change the overall assessment.

20...♘xh3+ 21 ♔h2

21 ♔h1 is another attempt, but 21...♕b6 22 e5 ♘f2+ 23 ♔g1 ♘g4+ 24 ♔h1 dxe5 leads to an easy win for Black.

21...♗e5+!

5 further points if you had seen this idea (either here or in the 20 ♕h5 line). The move interrupts any plans White may have had of playing e5, and secures a solid advantage.

22 ♘xe5 dxe5

The point is that the d2-bishop is attacked and 23 ♗b4 doesn't help since Black simply replies 23...♘g5.

23 ♖ed1 ♘f4! 24 g3 ♘e6 25 ♗c3 ♕g5

Black is clearly better, and went on to win in 41 moves.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 1.8

Hamdouchi – Lautier

Cap d'Agde 1994

17 ♘d5!!

This is the first element of a striking combination. Black's centre falls apart. Note that 17 ♕f4 ♖f8 18 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 19 ♖ae1 doesn't give White any advantage whatsoever. Black proceeds with 19...b5 with promising chances, because White is tied to the defence of the e-pawn.

17...exd5

On 17...♕d8, the simplest is 18 ♘f6+ ♘xf6 19 exf6 ♗f8 20 ♗e5, when White is winning.

18 ♖xf7!

5 points if you had the guts to try this out. Of course it can only be justified if you had some of the lines in the next note worked out. In fact, Larry Christiansen (in *Storming the Barricades*) concludes that White can also invert his last two moves, i.e. 17 ♖xf7! ♔xf7 18 ♘d5!, so there are also 5 points if you chose to play the combination in this way. Then 18...exd5 transposes to the next note, while 18...♕d8 is answered by 19 ♖f1+ ♔g8 20 ♘f6+. Then White wins easily after 20...♘xf6 21 exf6 ♖e7 22 fxe7 ♕xe7 23 ♗xc5 ♕xc5 24 ♕f4!, and if 20...♔h8, 21 ♘xh7! demolishes the defences, e.g. 21...♔xh7 22 ♕h5+ ♔g8 23 ♕f7+ ♔h8 24 ♖f5! and Black is soon mated.

18...♗f8?

Accepting the rook is more resilient: 18...♔xf7 19 ♗xd5+ ♔e7 (after 19...♔f8 20 ♕f4+, 20...♔e7 21 ♕g5+ transposes, while 20...♘f6 loses to 21 exf6! ♕xf4 22 ♗xc5+) 20 ♕g5+ (20 ♕h4+ is also good) 20...♘f6 21 exf6+ gxf6 22 ♗xf6+ ♔d7 23 ♖d1 and I'd be surprised if Black has an adequate defence. Christiansen attempts to make 23...♕d6!? work, based on the point that after 24 ♗f3 ♔c7! White cannot play 25 ♖xd6?? in view of 25...♖e1+ 26 ♔g2 ♖g1#. He provides masses of complicated variations after White's best reply, 25 ♔g2!, but White should really avoid all this. Rather than 24 ♗f3, he has the much stronger 24 b4!, when I do not see an adequate defence for Black. Then if 24...♗xb4, 25 ♗f3 is strong.

19 ♗xd5

With such sacrifices it is not always necessary to have it all worked out. What really counts is intuition. In this case, White doesn't have to go much further than this. He has two sound pawns for the piece, a rook on the 7th, and a couple of raging bishops attacking Black's king.

19...♔h8

Now White has a choice of several promising continuations.

20 ♖af1

20 e6 is also strong.

20...♕d8 21 ♕f3 ♗e7 22 ♖xg7! ♔xg7 23 ♕f7+ ♔h6

Or 23...♔h8 24 e6+ ♘f6 25 ♖xf6 ♕xd5+ 26 ♖f3+ ♕xd4 27 ♕xe8+ ♔g7 28 ♕xe7+ +–.

24 h4!!

This move completes the mating-net.

24...♗g5 25 hxg5+

25 ♗e4 is even more accurate.

25...♕xg5 26 ♕xe8 ♕xg3 27 ♕e6+ ♕g6 28 ♗e3+ 1-0

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 1.9

Plaskett – Gallagher

Chichester 1982

It is clear that Black cannot concede control of the d6-square, as a white knight would land there with lethal effect. Black should also avoid opening the f-file by 17...fxe4, because White simply recaptures with 18 ♘xe4 and threatens 19 ♗h5+, e.g. 18...♗xb4 19 ♗h5+ g6 20 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 21 ♖xf6 and White wins.

17...♗xb4

2 points if you decided to accept the pawn for the above reasons.

18 ♗h5+ g6

18...♔f8 (3 points) is actually worth a try (note that this wouldn't be possible without the insertion of 17 b4 ♗xb4, due to 18 ♘f7 ♖g8 19 ♘xc5 ♕xc5 20 ♕d8#). White's best seems to be the rather unclear 19 ♘f7 (19 a3 ♗a5 20 ♘d6 ♕xg5 21 ♘f7 ♕h4 would backfire horribly) 19...♖g8 20 ♘eg5 g6 21 ♗f3 ♖a7 22 ♕d4 ♗c5 23 ♕h4, when I assume some sort of compensation can be claimed.

19 ♘xh7 ♔f7!

2 more points if you prepared this. It is a good move but quite easy to foresee, given that you already knew the line 17 ♗h5+ g6 18 ♘xh7 ♔f7!, etc.

19...♖xh7 would give White tremendous pressure after 20 ♗xg6+ ♖f7 21 ♕h5.

20 ♖xf5+!

This is certainly White's best try.

20...exf5 21 ♘eg5+ ♔g8!

5 points if you managed to calculate this far. The king retreat is far from natural, but forced. In the game, Gallagher mistakenly chose 21...♔g7? but after 22 ♕d4+ White was winning. This is the key idea of 17 b4: the queen gains access to d4. The game concluded quickly after another mistake: 22...♔h6? (22...♔g8 would require White to continue accurately: 23 ♗f3! ♗b7 24 ♘f6+ ♔f8 25 ♘d7+, and White wins) 23 ♕xh8 gxh5 24 ♘f8+ ♔xg5 25 h4+ 1-0. Black loses his queen to a knight fork.

22 ♕d5+

22 ♗xg6 ♘d7! is good for Black.

22...♗e6! 23 ♕xa8 ♔g7

Black is much better, as White's attack is rapidly disappearing.

Maximum: 9 points.

Test 1.10

Schmaltz – Cu. Hansen

Harplinge 1998

In some Scheveningen positions ...♗c8 would be the standard reply but here after 11...♗c8 12 g5 ♘d7 13 ♗f3 White has an advantage over some of the main lines as he is not compelled to play ♔h1 (which is often played to prepare White's pawn-storm).

The right move is...

11...d5!

3 points. "An early flank attack must be met by a reaction in the centre." In this case the general rule of thumb works well for Black.

12 exd5?!

This is often a sensible idea since Black is saddled with an isolated pawn but here it turns out that White's king is too vulnerable when the position opens up.

12 e5 is probably better but after 12...♘e4! 13 ♘xe4 dxe4 14 c3 ♖fd8 15 ♕b1 ♘a5 16 ♕xe4 ♘xb3 17 axb3 ♗c6 18 ♕c2 ♗d5 Black has good compensation according to Minić.

12...♘xd5

Pritchett's suggestion, 12...♘b4!, is not without venom either.

13 ♘xd5 exd5 14 ♕d2

14 ♕xd5 ♘b4 15 ♕d2 ♖ad8! 16 ♘d4 ♘d5 gives Black good compensation.

14...♖fe8 15 ♖ae1?!

15 c3 ♖ad8 would be approximately equal, although I would slightly prefer Black's dynamic possibilities. The text-move allows Black to follow up powerfully.

15...♗h4! 16 ♗f2

16 ♖d1 ♘b4! 17 c3 ♘c2 18 ♗c5 ♗a4! 19 ♗xa7 ♖xa7 20 ♕xc2 ♕b6+ 21 ♔g2 ♗c6 22 ♗d3 h5 offers Black very good chances according to Ftačnik.

16...♗xf2+ 17 ♖xf2 ♖ad8 18 ♖ef1 ♕b6 19 ♔h1 d4!

A powerful move: the a8-h1 diagonal is opened and White's pieces are severely restricted by this pawn. The game concluded:

20 ♗f3 ♖e3 21 h3 ♗e6 22 ♔h2 ♗c4 23 ♖d1 d3! 24 ♗xc6 bxc6 25 ♘c1 h5! 26 cxd3 ♖exd3 27 ♘xd3 ♖xd3 0-1

Maximum: 3 points.

Test 1.11

Nadyrkhanov – Rublevsky

Krasnodar 1997

16...♖b4!

3 points. A quieter continuation would let White slowly build up a better position but this even wins a pawn for Black. White ends up not being able to protect the d4-pawn.

17 ♖d3

White should probably play for compensation with 17 ♕c2 ♕xd4 18 ♖d1 ♕b6 19 ♖c3 ♗b7 20 ♖d7.

17...♗a6 18 ♖d2 ♕b6!

2 more points if you had foreseen this. There is little White can do to prevent 19...♖d8.

19 ♘c5 ♗xc5 20 dxc5 ♕xc5

White's compensation is insufficient and Black went on to win the game smoothly:

21 ♕f3 ♕b6 22 ♖ad1 ♗b7 23 ♖d6 a5! 24 ♕d3 g6 25 ♖d4 c5 26 ♖d6 ♕c7 27 ♖d8 ♖xd8 28 ♕xd8+ ♕xd8 29 ♖xd8+ ♔g7 30 ♖d2 ♖d4 31 ♖e2 ♗a6! 32 ♖e1 ♖d2 33 ♖b1 ♗e2 0-1

Maximum: 5 points.

The Middlegame

The Greek Gift

Test 2.1

Colle – O'Hanlon

Nice 1930

We begin with a classic example, where the evaluation of the sacrifice has been debated for many years.

12 ♗xh7+!? ♔xh7 13 ♘g5+

Now there are two major options (with the presence of White's dark-squared bishop on c1, the third common reply, ...♔h6, is rarely an option, and definitely not here):

A) 13...♔g6?

This was played in the game but is instructively refuted.

14 h4!

3 points if you saw this. 14 ♕g4 is a common follow-up but with Black's bishop covering the g3-square he can simply reply 14...f5 followed by ...♘f6, or even 14...♘f6 straight away.

14...♖h8

Vuković, in his excellent book *The Art of Attack in Chess*, believed only this to be the fatal mistake, but his improvement, 14...f5, can also be refuted: 15 h5+ (15 ♘xe6? ♕xh4 16 ♘f4+ ♗xf4 17 ♖xe8 ♕h2+ 18 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 19 ♔e2 ♕xd1+ 20 ♔xd1 ♗e5 and Black stands better) 15...♔f6 16 ♕xd4+ ♗e5 17 ♕h4! *(D)*. This is what Vuković had missed. If you saw it then you collect 7 points. White's attack crashes through, as Nunn shows:

B

a) 17...♔e7 18 ♕b4+ ♔f6 19 f4 wins for White, e.g. 19...♗c7 20 ♕d4+ e5 21 ♕c4 and mate in three moves.

b) 17...♕a5 18 f4 ♗c7 (in view of Nunn's line, 18...♗b8 could be a try, but then 19 ♘xe6+ ♔f7 20 ♘g5+ ♔f8 21 ♗e3!, intending 22 h6, looks strong, and if 21...♕a6 to stop this idea, then simply 22 ♗d4 is good) 19 ♘xe6+ ♔f7 20 ♘g5+ ♔f8 21 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 22 ♕e1+ ♔f8 23 ♕e6 ♕c5+ (with the bishop on b8, Black would have had 23...♕b6+ in this position) 24 ♗e3 ♕e7 25 h6! and White wins.

15 ♖xe6+! ♘f6

After 15...fxe6 16 ♕d3+ Black cannot avoid mate.

16 h5+ ♔h6

16...♖xh5 17 ♕d3+ ♔h6 18 ♕h7#.

17 ♖xd6 ♕a5 18 ♘xf7+ ♔h7 19 ♘g5+ ♔g8

After 19...♔h6, 20 ♕b3 is one simple way to win.

20 ♕b3+ 1-0

B) 13...♔g8! 14 ♕h5 ♕f6!

5 points if you had seen this vital defence for Black. It covers the f7-pawn and provides the king with a possible escape-route via d8 towards the queenside. Vuković gave 14...♘e5? (he actually awarded this move a '!' but this was based on a faulty assessment; if 14...♘f6? 15 ♕xf7+ ♔h8, 16 ♖e4! wraps it up) 15 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 16 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 and thought White had to settle for a perpetual check, but as Nunn points out White wins after 17 ♕h5+ ♔g8 18 b3!, as Black cannot prevent the arrival of the dark-squared bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal.

15 ♕h7+ ♔f8 16 ♘e4 ♕e5 17 f4!?

5 more points if you had discovered this way of keeping the attack going.

Instead, 17 cxd4 ♕xh2+ 18 ♕xh2 ♗xh2+ 19 ♔xh2 should be roughly equal.

17...♕d5 18 ♕h8+

I prefer this over 18 c4, after which Black should try 18...♕a5. If 18...♕c6, White seems to have good attacking chances after 19 f5, e.g. 19...♘f6 20 ♘xf6 gxf6 21 ♗g5! (Cummings). However, whether this is really sufficient is unclear; a sample line is 21...♔e7 22 ♗xf6+! ♔xf6 23 ♕h4+ ♔g7 24 f6+ ♔g6 25 ♖e4 ♗xh2+! (25...e5 26 ♖f1 wins for White) 26 ♔xh2 e5 27 ♖f1 (27 ♕g3+ ♔xf6 28 ♖f1+ ♗f5 29 ♖h4 ♖h8 doesn't look convincing) 27...♖h8 28 ♕xh8 ♕xe4 29 ♕g7+ ♔h5 30 ♕xf7+ ♕g6 31 ♕d5 ♕g5 32 f7 ♗f5 33 ♕d6 ♗e4 34 g4+ ♔h4 35 f8♕ ♖xf8 36 ♕xf8 ♕d2+ 37 ♖f2 ♕e3 and it seems that White has to settle for a perpetual.

18...♔e7 19 ♕xg7

A final 5 points if you reached the conclusion that this is White's best. White has a dangerous attack, for example after 19...dxc3 20 f5!?.

Maximum: 25 points.

Test 2.2

Liss – Tsesarsky

Kfar Saba rpd 1997

In this case, the sacrifice is actually a straightforward win:

22 ♗xh7+! ♔xh7 23 ♘g5+ ♔g6

23...♔g8 24 ♕h5 ♗e4 25 ♘xe4 will not save Black. White threatens simply to return the knight to g5. Tsesarsky gives 25...♖c8 (25...g6 26 ♕h6 ♗g7 27 ♕h3+–) 26 ♘g5 ♗f6 27 ♕h7+ ♔f8 and now 28 ♖xf6 or 28 ♘xe6+ would be the most straightforward.

24 ♘xe6!

The most clear-cut. 5 points if this was your choice.

24 ♕g4?? would be the usual follow-up, but then Black has 24...♗xh2+ 25 ♔h1 ♕g3!, offering a more than favourable queen exchange.

24 ♕c2+ is also good though. 5 points for this too, if you saw the line 24...f5 25 ♘xe6 ♕c8 26 ♘xf8+ ♕xf8 27 g4!, when White wins.

24...fxe6 25 ♕g4+ ♔h7 26 ♖xf8 ♗xh2+ 27 ♔h1 ♕e5 28 ♖dd8 1-0

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 2.3

Stambulin – Volkov

Krasnodar 1996

Though tempting and almost irresistible, 23 ♗xh7+ is not White's best move, as it only leads to a draw. For example, after 23 ♘g5 White would have a large advantage. Nevertheless, the game continued...

23 ♗xh7+?! ♔xh7 24 ♘g5+ ♔h6

1 point if you saw that this is the only move. Others can be dismissed fairly easily:

a) 24...♔g8 25 ♕h5 ♖xd1+ 26 ♔f2! ♖d2+ 27 ♔g3 ♖d3+ 28 ♔h4 and Black can only postpone being mated for one more move.

b) 24...♔g6 25 ♕e4+ ♔h5 (25...f5 would be Black's usual attempt to

escape with this type of move-order, but as e6 is not protected it doesn't work: 26 exf6+ ♔xf6 27 ♕xe6#) 26 ♕h7+ ♔g4 27 ♖f1 and mate in two.

25 ♖d3

How else is White going to swing over the heavy artillery?

25...♖xd3?

This is the crucial mistake. 5 points for seeing that if Black plays 25...g6! White must content himself with a draw. After 26 ♖h3+ ♔g7, White's problem is that Black quickly comes to the d-file, and hence White is one move short of making the attack work. White can force a draw with, for example, 27 ♖h7+ ♔g8 28 ♘xe6 ♕d7 29 ♖g7+ ♔h8 30 ♖h7+ ♔g8 31 ♖g7+, etc., but cannot achieve more than that.

26 ♕xd3

Now White is winning. The game concluded:

26...f5 27 exf6 ♖h8 28 ♘xe6 ♕d7 29 ♕h3+

29 fxg7 is even simpler.

29...♔g6 30 ♖g5+ ♔xf6 31 ♕f5+ ♔e7 32 ♖xg7+ ♔d6 33 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 34 ♕f6 ♖c8 35 ♘c5+ ♔c7 36 ♕g7 ♘b8 37 ♕e5+ ♔c6 38 ♕e4+ 1-0

Maximum: 6 points.

Test 2.4
Zhang Pengxiang – Peng Xiaomin
Beijing 1997

Wedberg, in his comments to the game in *ChessBase Magazine*, considered the sacrifice incorrect in this case. On closer inspection it looks more like White must play accurately to avoid defeat, and the correct outcome should be a draw:

21...♗xh2+!

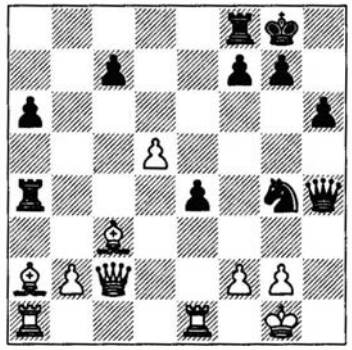
This move is definitely Black's best chance. He could play for an attack with 21...♕d6!? as well, as suggested by Wedberg, but I believe White should be able to defend in that case.

22 ♔xh2 ♘g4+ 23 ♔g1

Forced. 23 ♔g3 loses immediately to 23...♕g5, and 23 ♔h3 ♕g5 24 ♖h1 ♕f5! isn't much better.

23...♕h4 24 ♖fe1 e3?

This is the right idea, but at the wrong time. Black can't afford to leave his rook hanging. 5 points if you saw the correct way for Black to proceed, viz. 24...♖xa4! *(D)*. Note that instead 24...♕h2+? 25 ♔f1 ♖d3 is insufficient, in view of 26 ♖xe4 ♕h1+ 27 ♔e2 ♖xc3 28 bxc3 ♕xa1 29 ♖xg4, when White wins.



It is surprisingly difficult to defend against the threat of Black playing ...♖e8 and ...e3. A couple of attempts:

a) After 25 b3!? Black has two ideas that should both make at least a draw:

a1) 25...e3 and now:

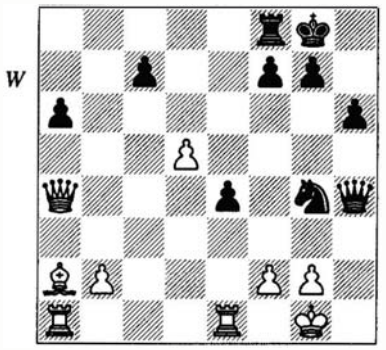
a11) 26 ♖xe3 ♕h2+ 27 ♔f1 and then 27...♕h1+ 28 ♔e2 ♕xg2 29 ♖e7 ♕xf2+ 30 ♔d1 ♕f1+ 31 ♔d2 ♕f4+ is at least a perpetual check for Black, but 27...♖f4! is much stronger. Then, for example, Black wins after 28 ♖e4 ♕h1+ 29 ♔e2 ♖xf2+ 30 ♔d3 ♕xg2.

a12) 26 fxe3 ♕h2+ 27 ♔f1 ♖e8 28 bxa4 ♖xe3 makes a draw by perpetual check: 29 ♕f2 ♕h1+ 30 ♕g1 ♘h2+ 31 ♔f2 ♘g4+.

a2) 25...♖e8!? (now in the event of 26 bxa4?, 26...e3! wins for Black) 26 ♕d2 e3 27 ♖xe3 (27 fxe3? ♕h2+ 28 ♔f1 ♖f4+! −+) 27...♕h2+ (27...♖xe3 28 fxe3 ♕h2+ 29 ♔f1 is far from convincing) 28 ♔f1 ♘xe3+ 29 fxe3 ♖g4 30 ♕f2 ♖xe3! 31 ♕xe3 ♕xg2+ 32 ♔e1 ♖c4 33 ♕xe4 ♕xe4+ 34 ♔d2 ♕xd5+, and, if anything, Black holds the advantage.

b) 25 ♗e5 is the refutation according to Wedberg, but he misses Black's best reply, and only gives 25...♖xa2 26 ♖xa2 ♘xe5 27 ♕xe4, which wins for White. Instead Black should play 25...♘xe5! immediately. Then after 26 ♕xa4 ♘g4 *(D)*, White already has to start looking for a draw. A further 5 points if you had seen this line. Then we have:

b1) 27 ♕c2 ♖e8! (this is far more accurate than 27...♕h2+ 28 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 29 ♔e2 ♕xg2 but even this looks dangerous) and now 28 d6 e3! 29 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 30 ♗xe8 e2!! is a nice point, while after 28 ♕xc7 ♕xf2+ 29 ♔h1 ♕h4+ 30 ♔g1 ♖e5! White has to sacrifice his queen in order to avoid total disaster, leaving Black better. Hence,



28 f3, anticipating the ...e3 threat, is necessary. A sample line from this position is 28...♕h2+ 29 ♔f1 ♕h1+ 30 ♔e2 ♕xg2+ 31 ♔d1 ♘f2+ 32 ♔d2 ♘d3+ 33 ♖e2 ♕xf3, when Black has four pawns and a continuing attack for a rook. I think Black has at least a draw in this line.

b2) 27 ♕xe4 seems like White's best, when Black has to be content with perpetual check after 27...♕xf2+ 28 ♔h1 ♕h4+ 29 ♔g1.

25 ♖xe3??

After this blunder, the attack does work. Instead, the calm 25 ♗xd4! would have decided events in White's favour.

25...♕h2+ 26 ♔f1 ♖f4! 27 ♖ae1

27 ♖ee1 is better but even then 27...♕h1+ 28 ♔e2 ♖xf2+ 29 ♔d3 ♕xg2 30 ♕c1 ♖d8 gives Black a terrific attack.

27...♕h1+ 28 ♔e2 ♕xg2 29 ♕b1 ♘xe3 30 ♔xe3 ♖e8+ 31 ♔d3 ♕g6+ 32 ♔d2 ♖xf2+ 33 ♔d1 ♕g4+ 34 ♔c1 ♕f4+ 35 ♔d1 ♕f3+ 0-1

After 36 ♔c1 comes 36...♕xc3+!.

Maximum: 10 points.

Attack and Defence

Test 2.5

Alekhine – Verlinsky
Odessa 1918

24 ♕d1!

3 points if you found this amazing defence. With one stroke White protects his rook on d6, avoids being back-rank mated and attacks the black bishop! Incidentally, 24 ♘g6+ (1 point) is also feasible but then White has to content himself with being only a pawn or two up after 24...hxg6 25 ♕h3+ ♔g8 26 ♕e6+. After the much stronger text-move, the game ended:

24...♕a5 25 ♕xe2 ♕xe5 26 ♖d5 1-0

Maximum: 3 points.

Test 2.6

Chigorin – Walbrodt
Hastings 1895

23...♕d6!

3 points if you found this, the only move. Other moves allow White an easy win, e.g. 23...g5? 24 fxg6 ♗xe4 25 ♖d8+ ♖e8 26 gxh7+ ♔f7 27 ♕g7+ ♔e6 28 ♕d7#.

24 ♖xd6 cxd6

White's vulnerable back rank costs him a piece.

25 ♗e3 ♖xe4 26 ♗f2

Black is winning, but Chigorin luckily escaped with a draw after a further 25 moves. The simplest would now have been 26...♖e2!, when after 27 h4 ♖d2, Black plays ...♖ee2 next.

Maximum: 3 points.

Test 2.7

Chigorin – Tarrasch
St Petersburg (2) 1893

40 ♖g6 indeed creates significant problems. If, for example, 40...♕f7??, there comes 41 ♖g7. Black's choice in the game was only marginally better: 40...♕xg6?? 41 ♕xf8+ ♗g8 42 ♗h5! ♕e6? (42...♕g5 would only prolong the game for a few moves: 43 h4 ♕f4+ 44 ♔g2 +–) 43 ♕g7# (1-0).

However, correct is...

40...♗d2!

When defending it is often worth looking for counterattacks. Here it costs Black a piece but the b-pawn ensures some payback. 5 points if you found 40...♗d2!.

41 ♖xf6

Or 41 ♕xd2 hxg6 and Black is winning.

41...♗xh6 42 ♖xh6 b3

Here comes Black's trump card. The pawn costs White a piece.

43 ♗d1 b2

3 further points if you saw up to here. Black wins back the piece and looks well on top.

44 ♗c2 ♖c8 45 ♖xd6 ♖xc2 46 ♖d8+ ♗g8 47 ♖b8

According to Chigorin White can hold this position. This is quite hard to believe when Black has two very fast pawns on the queenside, but he might actually be right! The ending is trickier than it looks at first sight. At any rate, White is certainly right to avoid 47 ♘e7? ♔g7 48 ♖xg8+ ♔f7, when Black is definitely winning.

47...a5

After 47...♖xf2+ 48 ♔g3 ♖d2 49 ♘h6 ♔g7 50 ♘xg8 a5 51 ♘e7 a4 52 ♘f5+ ♔f7 White can defend by 53 ♘d6+ followed by 54 ♘c4.

48 ♔g2! a4 49 ♘e3 ♖c1

49...♖d2 also comes into consideration but White has good chances of holding the position after 50 ♘c4 ♖xd3 51 ♘xb2 ♖b3 52 ♖xg8+! ♔xg8 53 ♘xa4.

50 ♖xb2 a3 51 ♖c2 ♖a1 52 ♘f5!

A final 7 points if you managed to see all the way up to here. The text-move is White's only chance. Other attempts lose:

a) 52 ♘d5 a2 threatens 53...♖g1+, and if 53 ♔f3, 53...♗f7 sets up the idea of playing 54...♗h5+. Then Black wins after 54 ♖c8+ ♔g7 55 ♖a8 ♖g1! (a clever manoeuvre to win the rook) 56 ♖xa2 ♗h5+ 57 ♔e3 ♖e1+ 58 ♔d2 ♖e2+.

b) 52 ♘c4 a2 53 ♔f3 ♔g7 (now on 53...♗f7, White has 54 ♘xe5) 54 ♖b2 ♗f7 55 ♘xe5 ♖b1 and Black is winning.

52...a2 53 ♖c8 ♖g1+ 54 ♔xg1 a1♕+ 55 ♔g2 ♕a7! 56 ♖e8 ♕d7 57 ♖xe5 ♕xd3 58 ♘g3

Here Tarrasch believed that Black should win, while Chigorin was more optimistic about White's chances and thought that White had reasonable drawing chances. I agree with Chigorin: I don't quite see how Black is ever making progress.

Maximum: 15 points.

Test 2.8

Polugaevsky – Nezhmetdinov
RSFSR Ch (Sochi) 1958

Actually, the fun is only just beginning:

24...♖xf4!!

5 points. This is a truly remarkable move. The idea needed to have been foreseen several moves in advance, which makes it only the more impressive. White's king is now chased further up the board, but the sacrifice involves a whole queen.

25 ♖xh2

White has to accept the queen. Capturing the rook can quickly be dismissed:

a) 25 gxf4 ♗xf4+ 26 ♘xf4 ♘xc2+ –+.

b) 25 ♘xf4 ♘xc2+ is more or less the same.

25...♖f3++ 26 ♔d4 ♗g7!!

A further 5 points for this amazingly cool move, which couldn't emphasize better that there is no way back for the white king. The mating ideas are plentiful but this is probably the most exact. Another solution could be 26...c5+ 27 dxc6 b5! (2 points if you only had this idea in mind). Black threatens mate in one, and to avoid it White has to give back large amounts of material: 28 ♗d3 ♘exc6+ 29 ♔c3 ♗g7+ 30 ♔d2 ♖xd3+ 31 ♔e1 ♖xd1+ 32 ♖xd1 ♗xb2. Black has a large endgame advantage but White can breathe a sigh of relief as he is still alive.

27 a4

This allows a beautiful finish but there was no satisfactory defence for White. After 27 ♘g1 ♖xg3 (the simplest) 28 ♘e2 ♖f3 29 ♘g1 the easiest way to finish off is 29...♘ed3+ 30 ♔c4 ♘xb2+ 31 ♔xb4 ♗c3+ 32 ♔a3

b5 33 ♕d4 ♗xd4 34 ♘xf3 ♗c3 35 b4 ♘c4+ 36 ♔b3 ♗xa1 –+.

27...c5+

Even 27...a5 was feasible.

28 dxc6 bxc6

This simple recapture forces mate in 6 more moves!

29 ♗d3 ♘exd3+ 30 ♔c4 d5+ 31 exd5 cxd5+ 32 ♔b5 ♖b8+ 33 ♔a5 ♘c6+ 0-1

Black will have the luxury of three different ways of mating on the next move.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 2.9

Makarychev – Krasenkov

Moscow Tal mem 1992

16 ♘d4!

This is a strong move, which interferes with the bishop's defensive duties. Now 16...f5? 17 ♘d6 looks too dangerous for Black, and 16...♗xa1? 17 ♘f6+ ♔h8 18 ♕xa1 is winning for White. There is no way Black can put up resistance on the a1-h8 diagonal.

3 points for this not so difficult first move.

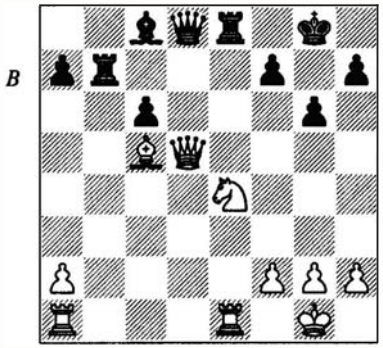
16...♗xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♘d5

This seems to solve the problem for Black. Of course, White has compensation due to his lasting control of the a1-h8 diagonal. The game continued 18 ♖c1 f5! 19 ♘d2 ♘f4 20 ♘f3 ♘e6 21 ♖xc6 ♘xd4 ½-½.

However, much stronger was...

18 ♗c5! ♖e8 19 ♕xd5!! *(D)*

A further 7 points if you hit on this fantastic move, which gives White much the better game.



B

Black has two ways to recapture:

a) 19...cxd5? 20 ♘f6+ ♔g7 21 ♖xe8 ♕a5 (21...♕xf6 22 ♗f8+ ♔g8 23 ♗h6#) 22 ♗d4 ♔h6 23 ♖xc8 wins for White.

b) 19...♕xd5 20 ♘f6+ ♔g7 21 ♘xe8+ ♔h8 is much tougher. Now White can secure a better ending with 22 ♗f8 ♗e6 (22...f5 might be more critical, but 23 ♖ad1 ♕xa2 24 ♘d6 still looks dangerous for Black) 23 ♗g7+ ♔g8 24 ♘f6+ ♔xg7 25 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 26 ♖ab1 but Kasparov mentions 22 ♗d6! as even better. He considers the white attack overwhelming but surely it is not over yet. I will agree, though, that White's attack looks very dangerous.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 2.10

Dragomaretsky – Arbakov

Moscow Ch 1989

In fact, it is White who is winning but not without an extremely clever defensive idea.

34 ♘b5!!

34 ♕d6 is the other possible defence. 2 points if this was your choice. Then 34...♖xd4 35 ♖xc1 ♕xd6 36 exd6 ♖d8 is roughly equal, but it would be risky for Black to aim for more, e.g. 34...♖c5 35 ♘c2! ♖xc2 (35...♕f4? 36 g5! hxg5 37 ♖xc1!, and if 37...♕xc1, 38 ♕f6 wins) 36 ♗xc2 ♗f4 with an unclear position.

5 points for finding the 34 ♘b5!! idea.

34...♕xb5 35 g5!

Now it is White who is threatening mate in few moves!

35...♖a4+ 36 ♗a2 ♖xa2+ 37 ♔b1!!

A further 10 points if you found this spectacular defence. It is a truly remarkable move, which, of course, had to be seen in advance. Now 37...♗xg5 38 ♖xg5+ hxg5 39 ♕xg5+ mates in two more moves, and if 37...h5 38 g6 ♗e8, White mates by a nice triangular queen manoeuvre: 39 ♕e6+ ♔g7 40 ♕e7+ ♗f7 41 ♕f6+, etc.

37...♖b2+ 38 ♔xc1 ♖c8+

White easily evades other checks as well.

39 ♔xb2 ♕e2+ 40 ♔a3 ♕xd1 41 gxh6+ ♔f8 42 ♖g8+! 1-0

Mate would follow next move.

Maximum: 15 points.

Test 2.11

I admit in advance that this is probably the most difficult of all the tests in the first part of this book. Solving it successfully requires examination of some rather lengthy variations.

19 ♘xc5!

This is in my opinion the right continuation. It is interesting that John Nunn in *The Mammoth Book of the World's Greatest Chess Games* doesn't consider this move. White seems to achieve nothing from 19 ♖e2. The following analysis is to a large degree based upon Nunn's examination of Velimirović-Ljubojević, Yugoslav Ch (Umag) 1972 in the aforementioned book:

a) 19...♔d7? is convincingly refuted by 20 ♗f5! (20 ♘xc5+ dxc5 transposes to the note to White's 20th move) 20...♗xd5 (20...gxf5 21 ♘xc5+ dxc5 22 ♖e7+ wins) 21 ♘xc5+ (21 ♘d4+ gxf5 is not very clear, e.g. 22 ♕xf5+ ♘e6 23 ♕f7+ ♔c8 24 ♕xg8+ ♔b7 25 ♕xh7+ ♘c7 and Black defends) 21...♔c6 22 ♗d7+! (this is a remarkable move; it is not clear whether White can squeeze more than a draw out of 22 ♗e6 ♗xe6 23 ♖xe6 ♕b6 24 b4 ♖ae8 25 ♕e5 ♖xe6 26 ♕xe6 ♖b8) 22...♔xc5 23 ♕e7! (threatening 24 ♕e3+) 23...♔b6 24 ♕xd6+ ♔a7 25 ♕xd5 ±.

b) 19...♘xd3+! 20 cxd3 and then:

b1) 20...♔f7 21 ♕h6 ♗xd5 22 ♕xh7+ ♔f6 23 ♕h4+ ♔f7 24 ♘g5+ ♔f6 (or 24...♔f8 25 ♕h6+ ♖g7 26 ♕h8+ ♗g8 27 ♘e6+) and here:

b11) 25 ♘h7+ ♔g7 26 ♖e7+ ♗f7 27 ♖xf7+ (27 ♘g5 ♖h8 28 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 29 ♖h7 ♕c7+! 30 ♖xc7 ♖xh4 is probably just about OK for Black) 27...♔xf7 28 ♕f6+ ♔e8 29 ♕e6+ ♔d8 30 ♕xg8+ ♔c7 31 ♕xa8 and now rather unexpectedly Black has a perpetual: 31...♕e1+ 32 ♔c2 ♕e2+ 33 ♔c3 ♕e1+ 34 ♔b3 (34 ♔d4 is met by

34...♕f2+) 34...♕d1+ 35 ♔b4 ♕d2+ 36 ♔a3 ♕xd3+ 37 b3 b4+! 38 ♔xb4 ♕d2+ and White cannot escape the checks.

b12) 25 ♘e4+!? ♔g7 26 ♕f6+ ♔h7 (on 26...♔h6 White can try 27 ♘c3 ♗xa2 28 f5 or even simply 27 ♕g5+ ♔g7 28 ♕xd5) 27 ♘c3 ♖ae8 (27...♖g7? 28 ♘xd5 ♕xa2 29 ♖e7 ♖xe7 30 ♘xe7 +–) 28 ♖e7+ ♖xe7 29 ♕xe7+ ♖g7 30 ♕h4+ ♔g8 31 ♘xd5 and I suspect White, with a knight and two pawns for the rook, could be better.

b2) 20...♔d7!? (surprisingly, Nunn pays no attention to this even though he mentioned it on the previous move, and with White's bishop playing a vital role in that line) 21 ♕g4!? (21 ♔b1!?) 21...♔c8 (21...♗xd5 22 ♘f8+ ♔c6 23 ♕d7+ ♔c5 looks risky but may be tenable) 22 ♘c5+ ♔b8 and I don't see anything convincing for White.

c) 19...♘xe6 20 dxe6 (20 ♕f6 ♗xd5 21 ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 22 ♕xe6+ is a draw by repetition) and then:

c1) 20...♕xa2 21 ♗xb5+ axb5 22 ♕xb5+ ♔f8 23 ♕d7 (23 ♕xb7 ♕a7 24 e7+ ♔e8 25 ♕c6+ ♔f7 26 ♕c4+ is only a draw) 23...♕a1+ 24 ♔d2 ♕a5+ 25 ♔c1 with a draw.

c2) 20...♗c6 (an attempt for more) 21 f5 ♕xa2 22 f6 ♕a1+ 23 ♔d2 ♕xb2 24 f7+ ♔f8 25 ♕f4 ♖h8 26 ♕xd6+ ♔g7 27 ♕xc6 ♖ac8 with an unclear position.

19...dxc5 20 d6!

5 points if this was your idea. The advance of the d-pawn is the most accurate. Take 2 points if you wanted to try 20 ♖e2+ ♔d7 21 ♖e7+ (21 ♕e7+ ♔c8 22 ♕e6+ ♔c7 and Black holds), which is less clear; after 21...♔c8 White has two ways to proceed:

a) 22 d6 ♔b8 23 ♕xc5 ♖c8 24 ♕e5 (24 ♕e3 ♗c6) 24...♖d8 is unclear. White has three pawns for a rook and can grab another one, with a continuing attack.

b) 22 ♕e5 ♕b6 23 ♖xh7 (23 d6 ♖d8 24 ♖c7+ ♔b8 25 ♕e7 is again far from clear) 23...♖d8 and Black should hold on.

20...♕d8

20...♔d7? 21 ♕e7+ ♔c8 22 ♗e4 and White wins.

21 ♖e2+ ♔d7

21...♔f8 might be relatively best but I would prefer White after 22 ♕h6+ ♖g7 23 ♖e7 ♕xe7 24 dxe7+. 5 more points if you had seen this line. After 24...♔g8 25 f5 (25 c4!?) 25...♖xe7 26 fxg6 (26 f6!? ♖f7 27 ♗xg6 hxg6 28 ♕xg6+ ♔f8 29 g4 ♖d8 30 g5 ♖fd7 31 b3! also appears good for White) 26...hxg6 27 ♕xg6+ ♖g7 28 ♕e6+ ♔f8 29 g4 White has a clear advantage.

22 ♖e7+ ♔c8 23 ♕xc5+ ♔b8 24 ♖c7!

A final 10 points if you saw this key move. White threatens 25 ♕b6 and leaves Black with a very difficult defence.

24...♖e8

24...♖a7 25 ♗e4! (25 ♕b6? ♕e8!) 25...♕e8 (25...♖e8 26 ♕b6 transposes to the main line) 26 ♖e7 ♕c8 27 ♕b6 ♔a8 28 ♗d5 ♖f8 29 d7 ♕b8 30 g3! and White wins. Black is in complete zugzwang. 30...♗xd5 (or ...♗xd5 at any point later) is met by 31 d8♕ ♖xd8 32 ♖xa7+ ♕xa7 33 ♕xd8+ followed by 34 ♕xd5+.

25 ♕b6 ♖a7 26 ♗e4! ♖xe4 27 ♖xb7+ ♖xb7 28 ♕xd8+ ♔a7 29 ♕c8 ♖e1+ 30 ♔d2 ♖e4 31 ♕c5+ ♔b8 32 ♕c6 ♖e6 33 ♕xa6

White wins.

Maximum: 20 points.

Test 2.12

Spassky – Larsen

Belgrade (USSR vs World) 1970

5 points if you are not convinced by Black's idea, and wanted to try the apparently risky...

14 ♕xf8!

This obvious capture was probably rejected by Spassky on the grounds of 14...♕xg5+ 15 ♔h1 ♕f5/h5 16 ♖g1 ♕xf3+ 17 ♖g2 ♘d3, when Black appears to have counterplay, but closer scrutiny discloses that this is largely illusory. First, the alternatives:

a) 14 ♗xd8 (1 point) 14...♘xd6 15 ♗e7 ♘xc4 16 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 looks like fairly good compensation for Black. After 17 ♖fd1 d5 18 b3 ♘d6!? Black has one pawn for the exchange, and a rock-solid position.

b) 14 ♕e7!? (3 points) was Spassky's choice in the game, and is not stupid either, but Black is able to wriggle out: 14...♕xe7 (not, of course, 14...f6? 15 ♕xf8 +–) 15 ♗xe7 ♖g8 (Spassky suggested 15...♖h8, intending ...♔g8) 16 ♖fd1 ♘c6 17 ♖xd7 ♘e5 18 ♖b7 ♘xc4 19 ♘e4! ♘a5 20 ♖d7 ♘c6 21 f4 ♖c8 22 ♖c1 a5 23 a3 was the game continuation; now 23...♘xe7 24 ♖xe7 ♖c7! would have left White only marginally better.

14...♕xg5+ 15 ♔h1 ♕h5 16 ♖g1 ♕xf3+ 17 ♖g2

5 more points if you are with us so far. Everything has been relatively easy to predict. Larsen now mentions 17...g6, with no clear assessment but White looks on top after 18 ♔g1 ♘g7 19 ♕d6 ♖d8 20 ♖d1 ♘c6 21 ♖g3.

The critical line is:

17...♘d3 18 ♔g1 ♘xb2

18...d5!? might be a better try. White must then be very careful; if 19 ♖d1, 19...d4! is strong. 5 points if you had anticipated 18...d5!? and intended to meet it with 19 cxd5 exd5 20 ♕e7!. Then, for example, 20...♘xb2 21 ♖g3 is good for White, and if 20...♔g8!? 21 ♖d1 d4 22 ♖xd3 dxc3 23 ♖g3! White is also much better.

19 ♖g3 ♕f5

This is the only reasonable move to prevent White's knight from joining in the attack by 20 ♘e4. Now White must continue sharply; otherwise Black will consolidate with a couple of pawns for the exchange.

20 ♔g2 ♘xc4 21 ♖g1!

A further 5 points if you saw this fine move to improve the attack. White threatens 22 ♖h3+ ♔g6 23 ♖f3!, winning. There are also 5 points for playing the immediate 21 ♖h3+ ♔g6 22 ♖f3 ♘c7!?, but only if you intended 23 ♕e7!, since, remarkably, Black is doing fine after 23 ♖g3+? ♔f6 24 ♕xg7+ ♔e7.

21...♘e5 22 ♖h3+ ♔g6 23 f4

White wins.

Maximum: 20 points.

The Endgame

Pawn Endings

Test 3.1

Khuzman – Sutovsky

Pula Z 2000

Unfortunately for White, the ending is lost after the queen exchange. White had of course foreseen the next few moves:

36...♔e5 37 ♔b4 ♔xd5 38 ♔xb5 e5!

2 points if you had seen this far. Now, Black is threatening 39...g4, so White has to come up with something really clever, as 39 h3 does not stop it: 39...g4! 40 fxg4 hxg4, and now Black wins after 41 hxg4 e4 42 ♔b4 e3 43 ♔c3 ♔e4! 44 g5 ♔f3. White's best is 41 h4 but Black has good chances of winning the queen ending after 41...e4 42 h5 e3 43 h6 e2 44 h7 e1♕ 45 h8♕ ♕b1+ 46 ♔a4 ♕xa2+.

Hence, Khuzman had thought up...

39 h4

...with the very clever idea that White is drawing after 39...gxh4 40 gxh4 ♔d4 41 ♔c6 ♔e3 42 ♔d5 ♔xf3 43 ♔xe5 ♔g4 44 ♔e4 ♔xh4 45 ♔f4 (try for yourself). Neither does 39...g4 work for Black, because White plays 40 fxg4, meeting 40...hxg4 with 41 h5. Black can probably draw with 40...e4 41 gxh5 e3 42 h6 e2 43 h7 e1♕ 44 h8♕ ♕b1+, etc., but certainly cannot achieve more than that.

What White had failed to take into account was...

39...a6+!!

A further 5 points if you had seen this far. This is a splendid little move. Now after 40 ♔xa6, 40...g4 is winning because White's king is too far away after 41 fxg4 e4 42 gxh5 ♔e6. The semi-waiting 40 ♔a5 has another drawback, for after 40...g4 41 fxg4 e4 Black is going to queen with check. The game continuation was...

40 ♔b4 gxh4! 41 gxh4 ♔d4 0-1

Black is simply picking up the f3-pawn, and now White cannot get around to the e-pawn.

Maximum: 7 points.

Test 3.2

Znosko-Borovsky – Evtifeev

St Petersburg 1914

43 f4! gxf4 44 h4

White has managed to create an outside passed pawn. 2 points if you had worked out this possibility. That is the easy part, though. The question is whether this will be enough to win.

44...♔e5 45 ♔f2 ♔f6 46 ♔f3 ♔f5 47 h5!

White's idea has been carried out. The h-pawn distracts the black king, and thereby White will get a head-start in the race towards the queenside – a very common theme in pawn endings. The same idea could arise via other move-orders, such as 43 ♔f2 ♔e5 44 ♔g3 ♔f5 45 f4 gxf4+ 46 ♔f3 ♔g5 47 h4+ ♔xh4 48 ♔xf4, etc.

47...♔g5 48 h6 ♔xh6 49 ♔xf4 ♔g6 50 ♔e5 ♔f7 51 ♔d4 ♔e6 52 ♔c5 ♔e5

White wins easily after 52...♔d7 53 c3 ♔d8 54 ♔xc6 ♔c8 55 ♔b5.

53 ♔xc6 ♔d4 54 ♔b5!

A further 5 points if you had seen this idea. This is the tricky part. 54 ♔xc7? would only lead to a draw after 54...♔c3 55 ♔b6 ♔b4 56 c4 (56 c3+ ♔xa4 57 c4 ♔b4 58 c5 a4 59 c6 a3 60 c7 a2 61 c8♕ a1♕ =) 56...♔xc4 57 ♔xa5 ♔c5 58 ♔a6 ♔c6, etc.

54...♔c3 55 ♔xa5 ♔c4 56 ♔a6 ♔b4 57 a5 ♔a4 58 c3 1-0

Maximum: 7 points.

Test 3.3

Euwe – Alekhine

Amsterdam Wch (24) 1935

30...e5!

2 points if you figured out that it is imperative to begin with this. The queenside pawns are not going far without assistance from the king, and thus Black must first prevent counterplay on the kingside. If White were to make a few free moves he would put his pawns on f4, g5 and h5, which would force Black's king to stay at home to stop White queening his h-pawn. Hence, with the text-move, Black first stops White playing f4.

31 ♔f1 b5

Black should begin advancing his pawns, and this is the correct way to start.

32 ♔e2 a5!

A further 5 points for working out the correct way of advancing the queenside pawns. Again Black should make a pawn move but only this move is right, because White was threatening 33 ♔e3 followed by f4. Alekhine was not on the alert and instead chose 32...c5?, and after 33 ♔e3 the game was agreed drawn, as White plays 34 f4, drawing easily. The point of 32...a5! is revealed after 33 ♔e3 b4 as following 34 f4? exf4+ 35 ♔xf4 a4, White is too late to reach the square of the a-pawn.

33 ♔d3 a4 34 ♔c3 c5 35 g4 ♔e7 36 ♔d3

Due to Black's 32nd move, which crippled the f-pawns, White is not able to create (or threaten to create) a passed pawn and hence he can only wait.

36...b4

This is the simplest. Now White's king must stay in the square of the a-pawn and Black's king will be able to advance undisturbed up the board. 36...♔d6 also wins: 37 ♔c3 ♔d5 38 a3 ♔e6 39 ♔d3 ♔d6 40 ♔c3 ♔d5 41 ♔d3 b4 42 axb4 cxb4 43 ♔c2 ♔c4 44 ♔b2 a3+ 45 ♔a2 ♔c3 –+.

37 ♔c4 ♔d6

37...♔e6 is also good.

38 h5

Black also wins easily after 38 ♔d3 ♔d5 39 ♔d2 ♔d4 40 ♔c2 c4, etc.

38...♔e6 39 ♔d3 ♔f6 40 ♔c4 ♔g5 41 ♔d3 b3 42 axb3 axb3 43 ♔c3 c4 44 ♔b2 e4

A final 3 points if you had seen this, the decisive part of Black's plan (it is not necessary to have the exact move-order worked out; the idea is good enough). Obviously, Black cannot just go for the f-pawn, but now White's pawns are split, and Black can in the end win all of them in return for his e- and g-pawns.

45 fxe4 ♔xg4 46 e5 ♔xh5 47 f4 ♔g6

There follows 48...♔f5 and ...g5, when the white pawns are liquidated, and Black wins.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 3.4

Åström – Shulman

Gothenburg 1999

The game continued:

50 h5!?

50 f4! ♔c5 51 f5 gxf5+ 52 ♔g5! (but not 52 ♔xf5? b4, when Black wins: 53 h5 b3 54 h6 b2 55 h7 b1♕+ or 53 ♔e4 b3 54 ♔d3 ♔b4) draws immediately: 52...b4 (52...♔d5 53 h5 ♔e6 54 h6 ♔f7 55 ♔xf5 b4 56 ♔e4 =) 53 h5 b3 54 h6 b2 55 h7 b1♕ 56 h8♕ =.

I should also mention that after 50 ♔g5 ♔c4, White should avoid 51 ♔xg6?, which loses to 51...b4 52 h5 b3 53 h6 b2 54 h7 b1♕+ 55 ♔g7 ♕g1+ 56 ♔f7 ♕h2! (Black should of course keep his hands off the f-pawn) 57 ♔g7 ♕g2+ 58 ♔f7 ♕h3 59 ♔g7 ♕g4+ 60 ♔f7 ♕h5+ 61 ♔g7 ♕g5+ 62 ♔f7 ♕h6 63 ♔g8 ♕g6+ 64 ♔h8 ♕f7 65 f4 ♕f8#. Instead White draws by 51 f4! b4 52 f5 gxf5 53 h5!, which is similar to the analysis of 50 f4!.

50...gxh5+ 51 ♔xh5

51 ♔g5? h4! 52 ♔xh4 ♔c5 wins for Black.

51...♔c5 52 f4 ♔d6 53 ♔h6!

This is the tricky part. White just holds with this but 53 ♔g6? loses to 53...b4 54 f5 b3 55 f6 b2 56 f7 b1♕+ 57 ♔g7 ♕g1+ 58 ♔f6 ♕f2+ 59 ♔g7 ♔e7, etc.

53...b4 54 f5 ♔e5 55 ♔g6 b3 56 f6 b2 57 f7 b1♕+ 58 ♔g7 ♕b7 59 ♔g8

Or 59 ♔h8.

59...♕d5 60 ♔g7

Again 60 ♔h8 also holds.

60...♕d7 61 ♔h8!

White avoids the last pitfall. 61 ♔g8?? is a blunder due to 61...♔f6 62 f8♕+ ♔g6, when White is being mated!

Now it is a simple draw. It is interesting that Black cannot win even though his king is so close. The game concluded:

61...♕e7 62 ♔g8 ♕g5+ 63 ♔h7 ♕f6 64 ♔g8 ♕g6+ 65 ♔h8 ♕d6 66 ♔g7 ♕d7 67 ♔h8 ♔f5 68 f8♕+ ♔g6 69 ♕g8+ ♔h6 70 ♕e6+ ♕xe6 ½-½

5 points for either of the solutions but clearly 50 f4! ♔c5 51 f5 gxf5+ 52 ♔g5! is the simplest. The game continuation makes the task more complicated but of course leads to the same result.

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 3.5

Chekhover, *1956*

1 ♔e4

There is little point in waiting.

1...c6

This is required to stop ♔d5.

2 ♔f5 d5 3 ♔e5 d4 4 ♔e4 ♔g7 5 ♔d3

5 points for working out step 1 of White's defence, i.e. provoking ...d5-d4.

White would lose if he tried to defend his h-pawn. For example, after 5 ♔f4 ♔g6 6 ♔g4 ♔h6 7 a3 ♔g6 8 h5+ ♔h6 9 a4 d3 10 ♔f3 ♔xh5 11 ♔e3 ♔g4 12 ♔xd3 ♔f3 White's king is shouldered away from the defence of the c-pawn. This is a constant theme throughout this ending.

5...♔h6!?

This is quite sneaky. Black can also try 5...♔g6, when 6 ♔c2 ♔f5 7 h5 ♔g5 8 ♔b3 leads to the same position as in our main line (at move 9). This was the move-order Chekhover had in mind when he constructed the study but Sinar pointed out the slightly trickier move-order in the main line.

6 ♔c2 ♔g6 7 ♔b2!

As we shall see, it is essential that White's king is on b3 when Black takes the h-pawn: only in this way can White make his stalemate idea work.

It is interesting that this is the only move that holds for White, for after 7 ♔b3? ♔h5 Black wins:

a) After 8 ♔c2 ♔xh4 9 ♔b3 White will not achieve the stalemate, because Black replies 9...d3 10 ♔c3 (10 ♔a4 d2 11 ♔a5 d1♕ 12 a4 is unfortunately a move too late) 10...♔g3 11 ♔xd3 ♔f3 and again Black shoulders White's king away from the c-pawn.

b) Black also wins after 8 a3, because he can combine capturing the h-pawn with assisting the d-pawn: 8...♔g6 9 ♔b2 (9 h5+ ♔h6 10 ♔c2 ♔xh5 –+) 9...♔f5 10 ♔b3 (10 h5 ♔g5 11 ♔b3 ♔h6! 12 ♔a4 d3 13 ♔b3 ♔xh5 –+) 10...♔f4 11 h5 ♔e3 12 h6 d3 13 h7 d2 14 h8♕ d1♕+ and Black wins the queen ending.

7...♔f5 8 h5

White would lose in the event of 8 ♔c2? ♔g4 9 ♔b3 ♔f3.

8...♔g5 9 ♔b3 ♔h6 10 a3 ♔xh5 11 ♔a4 d3 12 ♔a5 d2 13 a4 d1♕

White is stalemated! This excellent study reminds us to look for every possible defence in difficult situations.

There are 10 points for working out the stalemate idea and 5 points for noticing the sort of mutual zugzwang that arises when White's king has to be on b3 when Black captures the white h-pawn.

Maximum: 20 points.

Test 3.6

Fine, *1941*

1 ♔b4 ♔b6

White also wins after 1...h5 2 ♔a5 ♔b7 3 ♔b5 ♔c7 4 ♔a6 ♔b8 5 e6 ♔c7 6 ♔xa7 ♔d6 7 ♔b6 ♔xe6 8 ♔c6 ♔e7 9 ♔c7 ♔e6 10 ♔d8 ♔f7 (10...♔d5 11 ♔e7 ♔e4 12 ♔f6 ♔f3 13 ♔xg6 ♔xg3 14 ♔g5! +– is a common theme) 11 ♔d7 ♔f6 12 ♔e8 ♔g7 13 ♔e7 ♔h7 14 ♔f7 ♔h6 15 ♔g8 +–.

2 ♔a4 ♔c6

2...a6 3 ♔b4 ♔c6 4 ♔c4 ♔b6 (the alternative 4...♔c7 5 ♔c5 h6 is tougher but White wins in similar fashion to the main line: 6 ♔b4 ♔b6 7 ♔a4 a5 8 h5! gxh5 9 e6 ♔c6 10 ♔xa5 ♔d6 11 ♔b6 ♔xe6 12 ♔c6, etc.) 5 ♔d5 ♔b7 (5...a5 6 ♔d6! +–) 6 ♔d6 ♔c8 7 ♔c6 (7 ♔e7, and promoting the e-pawn, is even simpler) and White wins by first capturing the a-pawn. This was Fine's original solution, but 2...♔c6 is of course a tougher defence.

3 ♔a5 ♔c7 4 ♔a6 ♔b8 5 h5!

This is the only way that White can make progress. The idea is to create weaknesses on the kingside before sacrificing the e-pawn.

5...gxh5 6 e6

5 points if you had worked out the idea of sacrificing the e-pawn. However, it is imperative to preface this by creating weaknesses in Black's pawn-chain by 5 h5!.

6...♔c7 7 ♔xa7 ♔d6 8 ♔b6 ♔xe6 9 ♔c6

It is important to keep the opposition from the side.

9...♔f7!

This move represents the toughest defence.

10 ♔d7!

White has to play very accurately, as he cannot just go for the f-pawn: 10 ♔d5? ♔e7! 11 ♔e5 ♔f7 12 ♔xf5 h4 13 gxh4 ♔e7! is only a draw. This is a theoretically very important position and is what Black hopes to reach with his last move – more explanation of this follows in the note to Black's 11th move. 5 points for taking this option for Black into account.

10...♔f8 11 ♔d6!

Again 11 ♔e6? fails to 11...♔e8 12 ♔xf5 h4! 13 gxh4 ♔e7!, as in the note to White's 10th.

11...♔g7

Another attempt is 11...♔f7 12 ♔e5 ♔e8!?:

a) 13 ♔xf5? is only a draw as after 13...h4! 14 gxh4 ♔e7! White is not able to reach the Maizelis position in line 'b'. This is exactly what Black is hoping for: that he will be able to sacrifice his h-pawn and play ...♔e7 in reply to ♔xf5. A sample continuation: 15 ♔g5 (15 ♔e5 ♔f7 16 h5 ♔e7 17 h6 ♔f7 18 ♔f5 ♔e7 gets nowhere) 15...♔f7 16 ♔h6 ♔g8 17 f5 ♔h8 18 f6 ♔g8 19 h5 ♔h8 20 f7 and Black is stalemated.

b) White wins with 13 ♔e6! ♔f8 14 ♔f6 ♔g8 (14...♔e8 15 ♔g7 ♔e7 16 ♔xh7 and White wins) 15 ♔xf5 h4 16 gxh4 ♔f7 (to save his position Black would need to be able to play ...♔e7) 17 ♔e5 ♔e7 18 h5 ♔f7 19 ♔d6 ♔f6 20 h6, reaching a position analysed by Maizelis in 1956. White wins after 20...♔f7 21 ♔d7 ♔f6 22 ♔e8 ♔e6 23 ♔f8 ♔f6 24 ♔g8 ♔g6 25 f5+ ♔f6 26 ♔xh7 ♔f7 27 f6, etc.

12 ♔e7 ♔g6 13 ♔e6 h6 14 ♔e5 ♔g7 15 ♔xf5 ♔f7 16 ♔e5 ♔e7 17 f5 ♔f7 18 f6 ♔e8 19 ♔f4 ♔f8 20 ♔e4 ♔e8 21 ♔e5 ♔f8 22 ♔e6 ♔e8 23 f7+ ♔f8 24 ♔f6 h4 25 gxh4 h5 26 ♔g6

White wins.

5 more points for working out the final part of the endgame.

Maximum: 15 points.

Opposite-Coloured Bishops

Test 3.7

Maynard – Godena

Thessaloniki OL 1988

This is a fairly simple one to start off with but if we remove the g- and h-pawns this position would be a draw. The inclusion of the pawns on the kingside gives Black a crucial second object to attack:

65 ♔c2 ♔a3 66 ♗d3 b3+ 67 ♔d1 ♔b2 68 ♗c4 ♔c3 69 ♗f7 e2+!

5 points if you worked out this idea to queen the b-pawn.

70 ♔xe2 ♔c2 71 ♗g6+ ♔c1 0-1

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 3.8

Ilinčić – Todorčević

Yugoslav Ch (Pljevlja) 1989

The defender is often seen holding endgames with two pawns less. The outcome depends on whether the pawns are passed or separated. In the latter case the attacking side often needs at least two files between the pawns to win. Of course, it also matters how far advanced the pawns are.

The position in question is indeed an easy draw but, presumably in time-trouble, Black lost the thread with 56...♗f8?? 57 ♔f7 ♗c5 58 ♔e8! ♔c7 59 e6 ♔d6 60 ♔f7! 1-0. It is certainly right to transfer the bishop to the f8-a3 diagonal but the chosen moment is unfortunate. White's king cannot be allowed to reach e8.

Instead **56...♔d8** would comfortably save the game (Black can also draw by 56...♗f4 or 56...♗g7, attacking the e5-pawn and hence preventing White's king from moving forward). After **57 c5 ♗f8 58 ♔d5 ♔c7** White can never make progress since Black keeps the bishop on the f8-a3 diagonal.

5 points if you found either of these drawing methods.

Maximum: 5 points.

Test 3.9

Kovačević – Day

Toronto 1989

65...♔f6

Obviously, Black has to try to bring his king back.

66 ♗c8 ♔f7 67 ♗g4

White threatens to win by playing 68 d7.

67...♔e8!

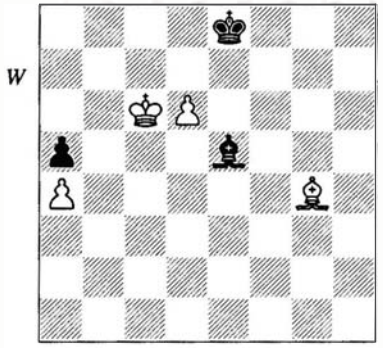
5 points if you are with us so far. White has logically improved the position of his bishop, while Black has hurried backwards with his king, but right here precision is called for. By playing 67...♔e8! Black can meet 68 d7+ with 68...♔d8.

In the game Black failed to acknowledge the threat of 68 d7 and mistakenly continued with the passing move 67...♗f4?. Play continued 68 d7 ♔e7 69 ♔b6! (note that White wins the a-pawn; Black cannot defend it because 69...♗d2 is met by 70 ♔c7) 69...♔d8 70 ♔xa5 (now it is a win) 70...♔c7 71 ♔b5 ♗e3 72 a5 ♗f2 73 ♔c4 ♗e1 74 a6 ♗h4 75 ♔d4 (there is no reason why White could not play 75 ♔d5 straight away) 75...♗f2+ (75...♔b6 76 ♗e2 ♔c7 77 ♔d5 makes no real difference) 76 ♔d5 ♗h4 77 ♗f3 ♔b6 78 ♗e2 ♔c7 79 ♗f1 ♔b8 (79...♗f2 does not help; White wins with 80 ♔e6: 80...♔d8 81 ♔d6 followed by 82 ♔c6, 83 ♗h3 and 84 ♔b7, or 80...♗h4 81 ♔f7 ♗g5 82 ♔e8 ♗f6 83 ♗g2 ♔b6 84 ♗b7 ♔c7 85 ♗c8) 80 ♔e6 1-0. The winning method has already been described: White brings his king to e8 and his bishop to c8.

This teaches us that Black cannot afford to lose his a-pawn. Fortunately, White cannot win it if Black defends correctly.

We return to 67...♔e8! *(D)*.

68 ♔c7 ♔f7 69 ♔d7 ♗f4 70 ♗h5+ ♔f8!



5 more points if you managed to work it out all the way up to here. Black's last few moves could have been played slightly differently but it is necessary for Black to return to the 8th rank when White checks with his bishop on h5.

70...♔f6? loses to 71 ♔c6 ♗g3 72 ♗g4! followed by 73 d7 and 74 ♔b6, with a win; compare with the note to Black's 67th move.

71 ♔e6

The only try. 71 ♔c6 is met by a passing move, 71...♗g3.

71...♗g3 72 d7 ♗c7 73 ♗e2 ♗d8 74 ♔d6 ♗b6 75 ♔c6 ♗d8

The position is drawn. White cannot force the bishop away from the d8-a5 diagonal.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 3.10

Stohl – Haba

Czechoslovak Ch (Trinec) 1988

This is an interesting endgame. The two passed pawns on a2 and a7 rather complicate the issue. White cannot realistically hope to be able to assist his a7-pawn, so the pawn is not really dangerous, but it does play a role, because Black's bishop is limited to operating on a single diagonal. Likewise with Black's a2-pawn, although that one is the more important. We will come to see why.

But how is Black going to make progress? It is not very likely that he will be allowed simply to walk his king up the board to assist the a2-pawn. It is time for him to make a very good plan, and it can be broken into three steps:

Step 1: Advance the king to c4.

Step 2: Sacrifice the d-pawn in order to create a second passed pawn.

Step 3: Walk the king to the kingside.

Here is how it works:

44...♗a8! 45 ♔d3 ♔d5 46 ♗b2 ♔c5 47 ♗d4+

47 ♗c3 ♔b5 makes no real difference, while 47 ♔c3 drops the a-pawn to 47...♔b6.

47...♔b4 48 ♗a1 ♗e4+ 49 ♔d2 ♔c4

Step 1 of Black's plan is completed, namely getting access to c4 with the king. White couldn't avoid this. Now Black will create another passed pawn with the help of a pawn sacrifice.

7 points if you worked this out.

50 ♗b2 ♗a8! 51 ♗a1 d5 52 ♗b2 d4!

A very typical feature of opposite-coloured bishop endings. Pawns don't seem to matter that much, but passed pawns do!

5 more points if you had prepared this idea.

53 ♗xd4

53 exd4 is met by 53...f4. Black will then play ...♗d5 followed by ...♔b5-a6xa7.

53...f4 54 ♗e5 f3! 55 ♗d4

If White attempts to give up his e-pawn with 55 e4 ♗xe4 56 ♔e3, Black will again win by transferring his king to f5: 56...♗c6 57 ♗a1 ♔c5 58 ♗b2 ♔d6 59 ♗c3 ♔e6 60 ♗a1 ♔f5 61 ♗f6 h6 62 h4 h5 followed by ...♔g4 and ...♔xh4.

55...♗e4

Black would be horribly wrong to sacrifice his f-pawn for access with the king: 55...♔b3 56 ♗e5 f2?? 57 ♔e2 ♔c2 58 ♔xf2 ♔b1 59 ♔g3 a1♕ 60 ♗xa1 ♔xa1 61 ♔f4 and suddenly White wins.

56 ♗e5 ♔c5 57 ♔e1 ♗a8

A final 8 points if you had worked out the final step of Black's plan, i.e. the king-walk to f5.

0-1

Black's king will inevitably get to f5, and then White's kingside falls apart. Note that White cannot set up a defence with 58 ♗a1 ♔d5 59 ♗f6 ♔e4 60 ♔d2 ♔f5 61 ♔e1 since Black plays 61...h6 and White is in zugzwang. 62 h4 is met by 62...h5 and 63...♔g4, whereas after 62 ♔f2 Black plays 62...hxg5 followed by ...♔e4-d3, and in the event of 62 ♔d2 the king walks in the other direction: 62...hxg5 followed by ...♔g4-h3.

Maximum: 20 points.

Test 3.11

Movsesian – Adams

Bundesliga 1998/9

Actually, both moves lose. We begin with the game continuation:

A) 84...♗b7 85 ♔f5 ♗f3

We shall see that this is far from an ideal place for the bishop. The alternative, 85...♗c8, leads to lines similar to Line B below.

86 ♗b4!

Black is in zugzwang. His king must retreat. Note, though, that 86 b7? ♗xb7 87 ♔xg4 throws away half a point, as this type of ending is a theoretical draw. Was it on this trick that Adams had based his hopes?

86...♔c8

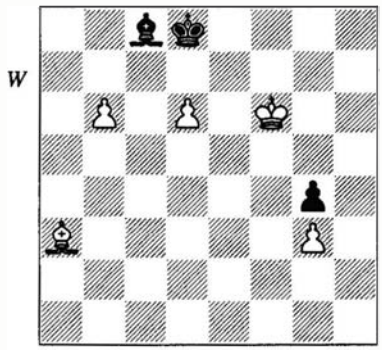
86...♔d8 isn't better. White wins with 87 ♔e6 ♗c6 88 b7!.

87 ♔e6 ♗c6 88 ♔e7 ♔b7 89 ♗c5 ♔c8 90 ♗d4 ♗b5 91 d7+ ♗xd7 92 b7+ ♔xb7 93 ♔xd7 1-0

5 points if you worked out the winning method for White.

B) 84...♔d8 *(D)*

This is more resilient but not quite good enough. The winning method is instructive:



85 ♔g5! ♔d7

If 85...♔e8, White first improves the position of his bishop. Then he will sacrifice his d-pawn at the right time: 86 ♗c5 ♔d8 87 ♗e3 ♔e8 (87...♔d7 88 ♔xg4 ♔xd6+ 89 ♔f4 is an easy win for White, because the pawns are too far separated) 88 d7+! (note how White first repositioned the bishop so it would cover the b6-pawn, and only sacrifices the d-pawn when Black's king is on e8, so it will be too far away to be able to deal with the b-pawn) 88...♔xd7 89 ♔xg4 and White wins easily.

86 ♗c5!

Again, White first takes his time to improve the position of his bishop. Note also that the bishop is always safe on c5, even if Black 'threatens' it with ...♔c6. Black will never actually be able to capture the bishop since his own bishop is unable to cover against both passed pawns on its own.

86...♔c6 87 ♔g6! ♔d7 88 ♔f6

Black would rather pass in this position if he could. The method of triangulating is more common in pawn endgames but here it is equally effective.

88...♔d8

88...♗b7 89 ♔g5 ♗f3 90 ♔f5 is similar to Line A above.

89 ♔g5

Now Black must stay on the back rank, and we can then return to the idea of moving the bishop back to e3, and then sacrificing the d-pawn.

89...♔e8 90 ♗e3 ♔d8 91 ♔f4 ♔e8 92 d7+! ♔xd7 93 ♔xg4

White wins.

15 points if you worked out the idea of placing the bishop on e3 and then sacrificing the d-pawn at the right moment.

Maximum: 20 points.

Rook Endings

Test 3.12

Piket – Kasparov

KasparovChess GP 2000

Black has established the best defensive set-up with 3 pawns vs 4 on the same wing, namely the formation f7+g6+h5. The position should be a fairly simple draw but White has a few tricks as he can try to penetrate into g5 with his king. Note that this is only possible because White has not yet played h4 himself. With a white pawn on h4, there would hardly be any winning chances at all. Here there are a few, and the fact that even Kasparov failed to find the right plan suggests that it is not that simple.

Kasparov's idea of putting the rook behind the e-pawn is the simplest way of drawing, but then White's king must not be allowed to g5.

Hence, after **41...♖d3 42 ♔h3 ♖e3 43 ♔h4** Black should play **43...♔h6!**. The only way White can make progress is by attacking f7, so **44 ♖c7** looks right, but after **44...♖e2!** both 45 h3 ♖xe5 (or 45...♖e4) 46 ♖xf7 ♖e1 47 g4 hxg4 48 hxg4 g5+ 49 fxg5+ ♔g6 and 45 g4 ♔g7! 46 h3 hxg4 47 hxg4 ♖e1 are simple draws.

An alternative way of drawing allows White's king to get to g5, but in that event Black should have his rook on the 5th rank: **41...♔g7 42 ♔h3 ♖b8 43 ♔h4 ♖b6 44 ♔g5 ♖b5 45 ♖c7** (if 45 ♖e2, then 45...f6+ 46 ♔h4 ♔f7 draws) **45...♖a5 46 ♖e7 ♖b5 47 f5** (White has to try this sooner or later) **47...gxf5** and after 48 e6 f4+ 49 ♔xf4 ♔f6! 50 ♖xf7+ ♔xe6 the ending is easily drawn. White can try other moves: while 48 ♔xh5 ♔f8 is simple, 48 ♔xf5 offers better chances, though Black still draws by simply keeping his rook on the 5th rank: 48...♖a5 49 ♖b7 ♖c5 50 ♖b2 ♖a5 51 ♖e2 (planning ♔g5) 51...f6, with a draw.

10 points if you worked out one of the drawing methods.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 3.13

Tondivar – Lutz

Leeuwarden 1994

White's task is simple in the event of 45...a5 46 ♖xb5 a4 47 ♖a5 a3 48 c7 or 45...b4 46 ♖xa6 b3 47 ♖b6 followed by c7. A further try is 45...♖a3 but 46 ♖b8, intending c7-c8♕, forces Black to repeat the position with 46...♖c3 47 ♖b6.

Is it only a draw then? No! As so often in rook endings, activity is the number one priority. With Black being unable to resolve the problems on the queenside, attention turns towards the kingside...

45...♔g6! 46 ♖xa6 ♔h5

Black goes for the h3-pawn. 5 points if you discovered this plan, which is the only way to win.

47 ♖b6

47 ♖a7 ♖xc6 48 ♖xg7 is well countered by 48...♖g6+.

47...♔h4 48 ♖xb5 ♖c2+! 49 ♔g1 ♔xh3

This is the important pawn. 2 further points if you had worked all this out. Black rightly avoids 49...♖xc6??, after which White can defend his h-pawn with 50 ♖b3.

50 ♖b7

50 ♖b3+ ♔h4 51 ♖b4+ ♔h5 52 ♖b6 is only slightly more resilient. Black slowly makes progress with 52...g5 followed by ...g4, ...♔g5, ...h5, etc.

50...g5 51 c7 g4 52 ♖b6 h5 0-1

White is effectively playing a ♖ vs ♖+2♙ ending, as the c-pawn is not worth anything in itself. This is a good illustration of the power of a rook behind the passed pawn. Here, the rook on c2 can simultaneously defend against White's c-pawn and assist in the attack on the kingside.

Maximum: 7 points.

Test 3.14

Unzicker – Lundin

Amsterdam OL 1954

It is certainly not. The win is very instructive:

49 a7!

In such endgames we are often told to keep the pawn on the sixth rank so as to have a hiding square for the king when it hurries to assist the pawn. With the pawn on a7 there is no hiding for White's king on the queenside, so Black can simply keep checking from behind, if White begins running towards

the pawn. However, and this is where it becomes instructive, here Black's 'active' position makes it the only winning plan. Indeed, if Black's pawn formation were f7+g6+h5 the position would be a draw, because the king could then creep backwards to g7 if required. By advancing the a-pawn to a7 in the given position, White makes sure that Black will not have time to capture a pawn on the kingside when the king runs up the board, and, equally important, White has spotted a hiding place – on the kingside!

49...♖a2+

There is no better defence than just to wait.

50 ♔d3 ♖a1 51 ♔d4 ♖a5 52 ♔c4 ♖a3 53 ♔c5 ♖a1

53...♖xf3 is too slow: 54 ♖f8 ♖a3 55 a8♕ ♖xa8 56 ♖xa8 ♔g4 57 ♖a3 g5 and now, e.g., simply 58 ♔d5 wins.

54 ♔d6 ♖a3?

This is actually an error. 54...♖a6+ is more resilient, and leads to the same type of position as occurs in the game.

55 ♔e7?

This is winning but White could have ended the game instantly with 55 ♖c8!, which threatens 56 ♖c5#.

55...♖a6 56 ♔f7 ♖a3 57 ♔g7 ♖a1

57...g5 also loses: 58 hxg5 ♔xg5 59 ♔f7 ♔f5 60 g4+ hxg4 61 fxg4+ ♔f4 62 ♔xf6, etc.

58 ♔h6!

This is it. The g6-pawn is vulnerable and the white king hides from the checks.

58...♖a6 59 ♖b8 ♖xa7 60 ♖b5+ ♔e6 61 ♔xg6 ♖a8 62 ♔xh5 ♖g8 63 g4 ♖h8+ 64 ♔g6 1-0

10 points if you found 49 a7! and had discovered the h6-square as a safe hiding place for White's king.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 3.15

Ilivitsky – Vasiukov

Erevan 1955

Actually, if it were Black to move, he would win with ...♔g7. White should prevent this, and hence 44 ♖c7! (5 points) is correct. However, we shall first take a look at how the game developed:

44 ♖c6?

This is a fatal error, which does nothing to counter Black's idea of improving his position.

44...♔g7 45 ♔g5 ♔f7 46 ♔f4

At first sight this is incomprehensible. White retreats immediately, but a closer look reveals that White can actually never capture the g6-pawn. For instance, after 46 ♖c7+ ♔e6 47 ♔xg6, Black replies 47...h4! and creates a second passed pawn, because 48 gxh4 allows 48...♖g1+ followed by ...c1♕. More seriously, perhaps, Black was simply threatening 46...h4!.

46...♔e7 47 ♔e3

How does Black actually improve his position if White just waits? It is worth investigating 47 ♖c3. Black doesn't achieve anything from running forward with his king immediately, as it would only run into checks from behind, and with no obvious shelter it wouldn't be able to assist the c-pawn anyway. However, we may use the ...h4 idea again, only this time by

first sacrificing the g-pawn: 47...g5+ 48 ♔xg5 h4! (Black creates a second passed pawn, or reaches a winning ♖ vs 2♙ ending) 49 g4 ♔d6 50 ♖d3+ ♔c5 51 ♖d2 ♔c4 52 f4 ♔c3 53 ♖xc2+ ♖xc2 54 ♔xh4 ♔d4 and Black wins.

47...g5 48 ♔d2 ♖f1 49 ♔xc2 ♖xf3 50 ♖h6 ♖xg3 51 ♖xh5 ♔f6

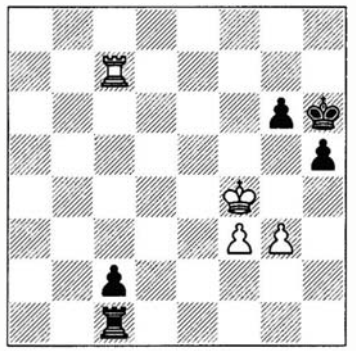
Black has reached a won ♖+♙ vs ♖ ending.

52 ♔d2 ♔f5 53 ♔e2 ♔g4 54 ♖h1 ♖g2+ 0-1

White won't be able to deal with the g-pawn: after 55 ♔f1 ♖c2 56 ♖h6 ♔g3 57 ♖h7 g4 58 ♖g7 ♖c1+ 59 ♔e2 ♖g1 60 ♖g8 ♔h2 61 ♖h8+ ♔g2 62 ♖g8 g3, etc., Black inevitably forces his pawn forward.

Now, back to **44 ♖c7!** *(D)*.

B



If Black wants to win, he has to try...

44...g5+ 45 ♔f5

...but since Black cannot improve the position of his king, White draws easily.

45...h4

The most logical try, although there are others:

a) 45...♖g1 46 ♖xc2 ♖xg3 47 ♖c6+ ♔h7 48 ♖c7+ ♔g8 49 ♔g6 ♖xf3 50 ♖c8+ ♖f8 51 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 52 ♔xg5 and White draws.

b) 45...g4 46 f4 h4 (or 46...♖g1 47 ♖c6+ ♔g7 48 ♖xc2 ♖xg3 49 ♔g5 ♖h3 50 f5 g3 51 f6+ ♔f7 52 ♔f5 ♖h2 53 ♖c7+ ♔e8 54 f7+ ♔f8 55 ♔g6 ♖f2 56 ♖c8+ ♔e7 57 ♖e8+ ♔d7 58 ♔xh5! g2 59 ♖g8) 47 gxh4 g3 48 ♖c6+ ♔g7 49 ♖c7+ and White draws, because 49...♔f8 can be met by 50 ♔f6 ♔e8 51 ♖e7+ ♔d8 52 ♖e2.

46 f4

The simplest, although 46 g4 h3 47 ♖c6+ ♔g7 48 ♖c7+ ♔f8 49 ♔f6 ♔e8 50 ♖e7+ ♔d8 51 ♖e2 does the job as well.

46...♖f1

Or: 46...gxf4 47 g4 ♖g1 48 ♖xc2 f3 49 ♖f2 ♖g3 50 ♔f4 =; 46...g4 47 ♖c6+ ♔g7 48 ♖c7+ ♔f8 49 ♔f6 ♔e8 50 gxh4 g3 51 ♖e7+ ♔d8 52 ♖e2 and White draws.

47 ♖c6+ ♔g7 48 ♖c7+ ♔f8 49 ♖xc2 hxg3 50 ♔xg5 ♖f2 51 ♖c1 g2 52 ♖g1

followed by ♔g4-g3, with a draw.

Maximum: 5 points.

How Good is Your Technique?

Test 3.16

Horwitz, *1885*

1 ♘b8+!

A difficult decision. Since White is actually sacrificing his b-pawn he has to be completely sure that the ensuing

endgame is really a win before choosing such a move. Here, however, there is no other way to win. The trick is to march the a-pawn to a7 and then block the h1-a8 diagonal with the knight but before this succeeds there are a few traps to avoid.

1...♔b5 2 a6 ♗a8

2...♔xb4 makes little difference. White wins with 3 ♔b6! ♗a8 4 ♘c6+ ♔c4 5 ♘d8 ♔b4 (or 5...♔d4 6 ♘b7 ♔d5 7 ♔a7 ♔c6 8 ♔xa8 ♔b6 9 a7 ♔c7 10 ♘d6) 6 ♘b7 ♔c4 7 ♔c6 ♔d4 (7...♔b4 8 a7 ♔c4 9 ♔c7 followed by 10 ♔b8) 8 ♔c7 ♔d5 9 ♔b8 ♔c6 10 ♔xa8 ♔c7 11 ♔a7 ♔c8 12 ♔b6 ♔b8 13 ♘d6 ♔a8 14 ♘b5 ♔b8 15 a7+, etc.

3 a7 ♔xb4 4 ♔b6

As in the last note, it is imperative to shoulder off Black's king. White's idea is simply to manoeuvre his knight to b7 and walk his king to b8 followed by capturing the bishop. There is a trap White has to avoid though: if Black's king can reach c8 the move after White has captured on a8 (in this case with the knight on b7; in other cases Black might have to aim for the c7-square), the position would be a theoretical draw, because White needs to win a tempo with his knight (in order to control c8, rather than checking the king when it is there), which is not possible. An example of this is shown in the next note.

4...♔c4 5 ♘a6

5 ♘d7 ♔d5 6 ♔c7 ♔e6 7 ♘c5+ ♔e7 is still a win for White after any move with the knight that doesn't just drop it, but White would have to avoid 8 ♔b8?, as after 8...♔d6! (or 8...♔d8!) 9 ♔xa8 ♔c7 Black reaches a well-known drawing position. White cannot get to control c8 without checking the king, which is simply met by ...♔c7. In order to do so, White's knight would have to reach any of the required squares (b6, d6 or e7) in an odd number of moves, and this is not possible.

5...♔d4 6 ♘c7

6 ♘c5 is two moves faster.

6...♗g2 7 ♘e6+ ♔e5 8 ♘d8 ♗a8 9 ♔c7 ♔d5 10 ♘b7!

We already know that White must beware of moving his king prematurely to b8; here 10 ♔b8? would throw away the win, due to 10...♔d6 11 ♘b7+ ♔d7 12 ♘a5 ♔d8 13 ♔xa8 ♔c7 with a draw.

10...♔e6 11 ♘a5 ♔e7 12 ♔c8! ♔e8 13 ♘c4

White needs to lose a tempo with his knight before he can go for the bishop.

13...♔e7 14 ♔b8 ♔d8 15 ♘a5 ♔d7 16 ♘b7

Mission accomplished. The black king ends up on the wrong square after 16...♔c6 17 ♔xa8 ♔c7, as White has 18 ♘d6!. White wins.

10 points for finding 1 ♘b8+!, which is the only way to win, and avoiding any of the stalemate traps hidden later on.

Maximum: 10 points.

Test 3.17

Kopaev, *1958*

1 ♔e2!

A surprising first move, which is better comprehended if we consider what happens if Black is to move in the starting position. Then 1...♔h7 2 ♖g5 followed by 3 ♖xf5, or 1...♔h5 2 ♔f4 ♔h6 3 ♔xf5 would be easily winning for White. Hence, we can use the idea of triangulation to aim to transfer the move to Black.

First, however, we need to understand that White actually cannot win by the direct 1 ♔f4?. Curiously, Black then reaches a more favourable position: 1...♔h7 2 ♖g5 ♔h6 3 ♖g8 (3 ♖xf5?? h2 4 ♖f8 ♔h7 −+) 3...♔h7 4 ♖d8 (since White cannot go for the f-pawn, this, or other moves along the 8th rank, is the only try) 4...♔g7! (4...♔g6? is met by 5 ♖f8 ♔h6 6 ♖f6+! followed by 7 ♖xf5(+), winning). This is the key position. With Black's king on the 7th rank White cannot make progress. There are two main reasons for this:

1) White's king cannot cross the 4th rank, because Black's pawns would then start advancing;

2) If White prepares to advance his king by moving the rook back to the first rank, Black simply protects his f-pawn with ...♔g6.

So, with the king on the 7th rank Black can maintain his pawn-chain f5-g4-h3. Here are a few sample lines to back this up. 5 ♖d6 and then:

a) 5...♔h7? is wrong due to 6 ♔g5! ♔g7 (6...g3 7 ♖h6+ ♔g7 8 ♖xh3 +−) 7 ♖d7+ ♔g8 8 ♖d1! followed by 9 ♔xf5, and if 8...g3, then 9 ♔h4, or 8...h2 9 ♔f4!, intending ♖h1xh2.

b) 5...♔f7! 6 ♖h6 (White gets nowhere after 6 ♖d5 ♔g6 7 ♖c5 ♔h6 8 ♖c6+ ♔g7 9 ♖b6 ♔f7 or 6 ♖d1 ♔g6) 6...♔g7 7 ♖h5 ♔g6 8 ♖h8 ♔g7 draws. White is never going to make progress. The white king cannot walk too far away from the pawns, meaning that the rook would have to control them. This cannot be done from the h-file, and if it moves to the 1st rank Black simply defends the f5-pawn with ...♔g6/f6.

1...♔h5

Here, after 1...♔h7 2 ♖g5 ♔h6, White has 3 ♖xf5 +−, because the king can cope with Black's remaining pawns from e2, whereas on f4 it stood in the way of its own rook.

2 ♔f2 ♔h4?!

2...♔h6 3 ♔e3! reaches the starting position but with Black to move. Note how the triangulation has passed the move to Black. As already discussed, the position is then easily winning for White.

2...f4 3 ♖h8+ ♔g5 4 ♔g1! reaches the same type of position as in the main line and is therefore the most resilient defence. The text-move actually allows White an easy win by 3 ♖f8 g3+ 4 ♔f3 g2 5 ♖h8+ ♔g5 6 ♔f2 ♔g4 7 ♖h7 (Nunn), when Black loses his h-pawn in a couple of moves.

3 ♖g7?!

We know from the note to the first move that White does not achieve anything by checking, if Black succeeds in maintaining his pawn-chain f5-g4-h3 and avoids ending up in the starting position with himself having to make the first move. The idea of the text-move is hence to force a weakening of Black's pawn phalanx, or to reach the starting position with Black to move. The latter is achieved after 3...♔h5 4

♔e3 ♔h6 5 ♖g8, and if 3...g3+ 4 ♖xg3 h2, White has 5 ♖g8.

3...f4 4 ♖h7+ ♔g5 5 ♔g1! ♔f5

5...f3 6 ♔f2 ♔f4 7 ♖f7+ is an easy win for White.

6 ♔h2

This is the same technique as would be used if the king were alone dealing with three connected passed pawns: White's king aims for the pawn that has advanced furthest. Then the rook will attack the g- or f-pawn, depending on the specific location of Black's king, in order to provoke a decisive weakness.

6...♔e4

6...♔g5 7 ♖f7 or 6...♔e5 7 ♖g7 ♔f5 8 ♖g8 would force a fatal weakening of Black's pawns.

7 ♖g7 ♔f3

7...f3 8 ♖xg4+ ♔e3 9 ♔xh3 f2 10 ♔g2 and wins.

8 ♖g8 ♔e2

8...g3+ 9 ♔xh3 ♔f2 10 ♖a8! wins for White.

9 ♖xg4 f3 10 ♖e4+

10 ♔g3 also wins.

10...♔f1 11 ♔g3!

A last pitfall is avoided: 11 ♔xh3?? f2 would be a draw.

11...f2

11...h2 12 ♔xh2 f2 13 ♖f4 and wins.

12 ♖f4

White finally picks up the remaining pawns.

10 points for finding the difficult first move, 1 ♔e2!. 5 more points for working out the method to make Black weaken his pawn-chain.

Maximum: 15 points.

Test 3.18

Guretzky-Cornitz, *1863*

1 ♔h6

White should be very careful when he advances his pawn further. In this position 1 h5? would drop half a point: 1...♔g8 2 ♔h6 ♗d3 3 ♖g7+ ♔f8! 4 ♖g3 ♗c2 5 ♖c3 (the main problem is that when White attempts to remove the king from the h-file, Black's king creeps into the corner again, for example after 5 ♔g5 ♔g7) 5...♗b1 6 ♖c8+ ♔f7 7 ♔g5 ♔g7 8 ♖c7+ ♔g8. White makes no progress as long as Black's bishop stays on the b1-h7 diagonal.

1...♔g8

If Black refuses to leave the corner, he could try 1...♗d5 but leaving the b1-h7 diagonal only makes White's job simpler. Here are two winning ideas for White:

a) 2 h5 (this is now feasible because the bishop is on the wrong diagonal) 2...♗e4 (after 2...♔g8 3 ♖g7+, 3...♔h8 4 ♖d7 is similar to 2...♗e4, and 3...♔f8 4 ♔g6 permits White's king to leave the h-file) 3 ♖e7 ♗c6 4 ♖c7 ♗d5 5 ♖c8+ ♗g8 6 ♔g5 ♔g7 7 h6+ ♔h7 8 ♖c7+ ♔h8 9 ♔g6 ♗d5 10 h7 and White wins.

b) 2 ♖d7 is actually the same idea, but here White holds back the advance of the h-pawn a little longer. 2...♗e6 3 ♖d8+ ♗g8 4 ♔g5 ♔g7 5 ♖d7+ ♔h8 6 ♔g6 ♗b3 7 ♖h7+ ♔g8 8 ♖c7 (by threatening mate and taking away the possibility of checking on c2, White prepares to move the h-pawn forward) 8...♔h8 9 h5 ♗d5 10 ♖h7+ ♔g8 11 ♖e7 (White repeats the manoeuvre) 11...♔h8 12 h6 ♗a2 13 h7 and White wins.

2 ♖g7+

The main idea of this check is to entice the king out of the corner. Then White's task is to prevent the king creeping back into the corner and simultaneously to remove his own king from the h-file. Not an easy job, actually, but you'll soon see how it works.

2...♔f8

We are already familiar with the winning idea after 2...♔h8, namely 3 ♖e7 (or 3 h5 ♗d5 4 ♖d7 ♗e6 5 ♖d8+ ♗g8 6 ♔g5 ♔g7 7 ♖d7+ ♔h8 8 ♔g6 ♗b3 9 ♖h7+ ♔g8 10 ♖c7, etc.) 3...♗d5 4 h5 and so on. The rule of thumb is that White can play h5 only when Black's king cannot escape the corner without allowing White to remove his king from the h-file. This is usually feasible when the bishop is not on the b1-h7 diagonal, because, as here, 4...♔g8 can be met by 5 ♖g7+ ♔f8 6 ♔g6.

3 ♖g5!

This is the key manoeuvre. White needs to get his king away from the h-file (ideally to f6) without allowing Black's king into the corner again. White introduces the threat of 4 ♔h5 ♗f3+ (else comes 5 ♔g4, etc.) 5 ♔g6 ♔g8 6 ♔h6+, winning, since we know that Black cannot go into the corner, and 6...♔f8 allows 7 ♖f5+.

3...♔f7 4 ♖g3

This threatens 5 ♔g5, because Black cannot step onto the g-file due to 6 ♔f4+.

4...♗c2 5 ♔h5!

We'll see that the bishop is short of good squares.

5...♔f6

Other moves are to no avail either:

a) 5...♗b1 6 ♖g5 and ♔g4 follows.

b) 5...♗d1+ 6 ♔g5 ♔g7 7 ♖c3 and the bishop never gets back on the essential b1-h7 diagonal.

c) 5...♔f8 6 ♖g5 ♗d1+ 7 ♔g6 ♔g8 8 ♖c5, etc.

6 ♖g5

Renewing the threat of 7 ♔g4.

6 ♖c3, in order to cut off the black king across the 7th rank, is an equally good idea: 6...♗e4 7 ♖c7 ♗f3+ 8 ♔h6 ♗e2 9 h5 ♗d3 10 ♖c3 ♗e4 11 ♖c4 followed by 12 ♖f4(+) +–.

6...♗d1+ 7 ♔h6 ♔f7

If 7...♗c2, 8 ♖g2 followed by 9 ♖f2(+) and Black's king will be further cut off.

8 ♖g7+ ♔f6

Because the bishop has been forced off the b1-h7 diagonal, the king must now stay in contact with the g6-square, because 8...♔f8 9 ♔g6 permits White's king to get to f6.

9 ♖g2 ♗b3 10 ♖f2+ ♔e5 11 ♔g5

White wins easily by finally advancing the h-pawn.

10 points for not advancing the pawn to h5 immediately and for the rook manoeuvre to g5. This technique is very instructive. A further 10 points if you actually managed to get the king on the right side, or forcing Black's king onto the e-file, as in the main line.

Maximum: 20 points.

Score Tables

The Opening

Test	Your Score	Maximum
1.1		10
1.2		5
1.3		6
1.4		5
1.5		8
1.6		5
1.7		10
1.8		5
1.9		9
1.10		3
1.11		5
Total		**71**

50-71: International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
40-49: FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
25-39: Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
11-24: Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
6-10: Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-5: Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

The Middlegame

Test	Your Score	Maximum
2.1		25
2.2		5
2.3		6
2.4		10
2.5		3
2.6		3
2.7		15
2.8		10
2.9		10
2.10		15
2.11		20
2.12		20
Total		**142**

90-142: International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
70-89: FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
45-69: Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
21-44: Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
11-20: Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-10: Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

The Endgame

Test	Your Score	Maximum
3.1		7
3.2		7
3.3		10
3.4		5
3.5		20
3.6		15
3.7		5
3.8		5
3.9		10
3.10		20
3.11		20
3.12		10
3.13		7
3.14		10
3.15		5
3.16		10
3.17		15
3.18		20
Total		**201**

140-201: International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
110-139: FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
70-109: Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
30-69: Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
16-29: Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-15: Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Now that you have filled in the tables and seen how well you have done, I should remind you that the categories are very approximate, and are only realistic if you have worked very hard at the tests, and analysed the positions thoroughly.

5 How Good is Your Chess?

Introductory Guidelines

Before embarking upon the 'How Good is Your Chess?' exercises, here are some brief guidelines on how best to work with the games.

1) Cover the page with a sheet of paper, a card or the like. Preferably two, actually, so you cover both columns. Then gradually reveal one line at a time.

2) Before each game you are given instructions as to which colour you will play and which move to begin with. Before each move you are asked to find, there will be a row of 4 asterisks. You will be given points (1-5) for finding the right moves. Try to analyse (without moving the pieces, of course!) as much as you would in a real game. There may be valuable bonus points to collect for seeing specific things in advance.

3) I recommend you begin looking for your reply immediately after seeing 'the opponent's' move, as there may be additional questions in the notes too (see the following sample).

4) At the end, add up your points. The table at the end of the game will show roughly what playing standard your total score implies. Of course, I should stress that these categories are only very approximate.

A Sample Game

There follows a sample game (no need to cover it up!) to give you an idea of how to work with the real ones that follow.

Here you are Black, and we begin from move number 17 (usually, this will be a little earlier but it is invariably the next move after the first diagram).

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♗g5 dxc4 6 e4 b5 7 e5 h6 8 ♗h4 g5 9 ♘xg5 hxg5 10 ♗xg5 ♘bd7 11 exf6 ♗b7 12 g3 c5 13 d5 ♘xf6 14 ♗g2 ♗e7 15 0-0 ♘xd5 16 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 17 ♘xb5 *(D)*

B

* * * *

17 ... ♕b6

2 points. This is a good move in several respects. It attacks the slightly annoying knight on b5, forcing it to retreat, and connects the rooks. It also protects the b7-bishop and thus restores the d5-knight's mobility.

18 ♘c3

What would you do in reply to 18 ♘a3 (D)?

B

Additional questions like this may pop up now and again. They are usually placed at points where I think it would be beneficial to have a reply to a certain move ready, or if I think the continuation somehow may be instructive. Ideally, you should already have a reply to the question ready in advance (this would mean that you had worked out several candidate moves for 'your opponent', and also thought about how to meet them) but if not, then you get a second chance to do so. The *questions* are always in *italic* and followed by a diagram. At this point you may wish to have your answer to the game continuation (18 ♘c3) prepared. Then move on to replying to the *additional question*. You will get points for correct answers to this question too.

A spectacular idea is 18...♖h4 (3 points), which was first worked out by Kramnik. While it protects the c4-pawn, it can also be centralized on the d4-square. Furthermore, Black toys with idea of doubling rooks or playing ...♘f4. Of course, a critical question is whether White can capture the rook, but 19 gxh4 is considered too risky in view of 19...♖g8! 20 ♘xc4 ♘f4 21 f3 ♖xg2+ 22 ♔h1 ♕c7, with excellent compensation for Black. Hence 19 ♕d2 is more common.

18...c3 (1 point) is the older continuation but here White has better chances of achieving an advantage.

* * * *

18 ... ♘xc3

2 points.

19 bxc3

* * * *

19 ... ♗xg2

2 points.

20 ♔xg2

* * * *

20 ... ♕b7+

2 points. Add 2 bonus points if you had already seen this when you exchanged knights on c3 on move 18.

21 f3

* * * *

21 ... ♕b2+

2 points.

22 ♖f2

* * * *

22 ... ♖xh2+

1 point. Note the point of checking on b7 on move 20.

23 ♔xh2

* * * *

23 ... ♕xf2+

1 point.

24 ♔h3

* * * *

24 ... f5

2 points. White will soon be mated.

In this game, 18 ♘c3 is a gross blunder but I have deliberately removed all marks like '!', '?', etc., as during a real game you wouldn't be told whether a move played is good or bad.

Game 1

We begin with an interesting game by the 12th Correspondence Chess World Champion, Grigory Sanakoev. In this game both Sanakoev and his opponent find a number of amazing ideas to turn in a memorable struggle.

You are Black, and we begin after White's 11th move.

Shapovalov – Sanakoev

corr. 1963-5

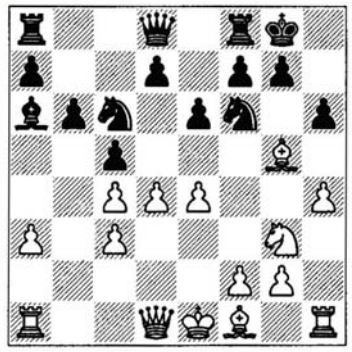
Nimzo-Indian

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗b4 4 a3 ♗xc3+ 5 bxc3 c5 6 e3 b6 7 ♘e2 0-0 8 ♘g3 ♘c6 9 e4 ♗a6

Another sensible continuation is 9...♘e8, which avoids the forthcoming pin.

10 ♗g5 h6 11 h4 *(D)*

B



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11 ... cxd4

3 points. With a white attack menacing it is a good idea to look for counterplay in the centre.

11...hxg5? 12 hxg5 looks devastating, but I actually liked 11...e5? for a brief moment, until I realized that after 12 d5 ♘a5, White ignores his c-pawn and continues the attack with 13 ♕f3!. A pretty line is then 13...♘xc4 14 ♘h5 hxg5 15 hxg5 ♘h7 (it is interesting that it doesn't really matter where the black knight retreats) 16 ♘f6+! ♘xf6 17 ♕h3 and Black is getting mated.

12 f4

This very aggressive continuation sets up the immediate threat of 13 e5.

White can also play 12 cxd4. Black should then avoid capturing on g5; even though the circumstances have improved, this still looks too risky. 12...d6, with the idea of capturing on g5 only after White has played 13 f4, is an idea but 12...e5!? might well be best. Now, in the event of 13 d5, Black plays 13...♘d4. Note the significant difference that the knight controls f3, and hence prevents the queen sortie that was decisive without the preliminary exchange of the c-pawns. Vegh-Polak, Vienna 1995 then continued 14 ♗e3 ♖e8 15 f3 ♕c7 16 ♖c1 ♕c5 17 ♖c3 b5! 18 ♘f5 bxc4 ∓.

* * * *

12 ... ♕c7

3 points. An excellent move, unpinning the knight. If White plays 13 e5, Black can simply retreat the knight to e8.

13 ♗xf6

After 13 e5 ♘e8 14 cxd4 Black has several attempts to thwart the attack, but the most effective is 14...f6!.

* * * *

13 ... ♕xf4

2 points.

14 ♘h5

* * * *

14 ... ♕xe4+

2 points.

One could easily be tempted by 14...♕e3+ (1 point) too, but Black would have to think carefully about his follow-up after 15 ♗e2. Is e3 really such a good square for the queen? Sometimes White's rook can come to h3, not only helping in the defence by forcing the queen away but also preparing to join the attack. 15...gxf6 16 ♖h3 ♕g1+ 17 ♗f1 does in fact look dangerous for Black, e.g. 17...♘e5 18 ♖g3+ ♘g6 19 ♕d2 ♔h7 20 0-0-0!? ±. Relatively best is 15...♕xc3+ 16 ♔f1 ♗xc4 17 ♗xg7 ♗xe2+ 18 ♔xe2 f5! with a messy position.

15 ♔d2

15 ♗e2 is the other option. 2 bonus points if you had prepared the risk-free 15...d3 16 ♕xd3 ♕xd3 17 ♗xd3 gxf6 18 ♘xf6+ ♔g7 ∓.

* * * *

15 ... ♕e3+ *(D)*

2 points.

16 ♔c2

* * * *

16 ... ♗xc4

3 points. This is an important tactic. Note that this was less convincing in the reverse order, i.e. 15...♗xc4, with the idea of 16 ♗xc4 ♕e3+, etc., because White prevents the check on e3 with 16 ♖h3!, and it is unclear how Black proceeds with his attack.

16...♕xc3+ (1 point) is also feasible but again this improves White's chances of defending by allowing the rook to h3: 17 ♔b1 g6 18 ♖h3 ♕a5 19 ♗d3 with an unclear position.

17 ♗xg7

* * * *

17 ... ♖fc8 *(D)*

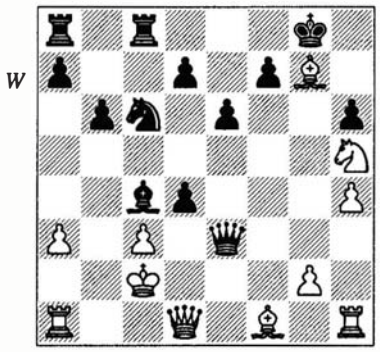
3 points. Black increases the pressure by putting his rook on the same file as White's king. Since White isn't really threatening anything on the kingside, he has time to do so.

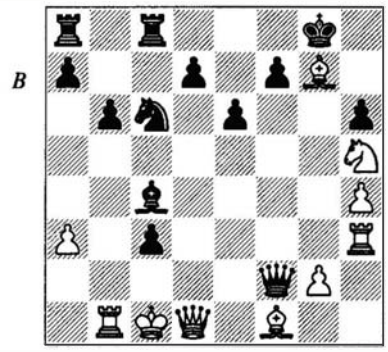
17...♕xc3+ 18 ♔b1 leads nowhere, and only limits Black's own possibilities. The attempt to transfer the bishop to another diagonal with 18...♗d5 is easily met by 19 ♖h3 ♗e4+ 20 ♗d3.

17...♘b4+ is a better try, but looks insufficient: 18 ♔b1 (certainly not 18 axb4? ♕xc3+ 19 ♔b1 ♕xb4+ 20 ♔c1 ♖fc8 −+) 18...♗xf1! (or 18...dxc3 19 axb4 ♕e4+ 20 ♔c1 ♕e3+ 21 ♔c2 ♕f2+ 22 ♔xc3 ♖fc8 23 ♗xc4 ♕e3+ 24 ♔b2 ♖xc4 25 ♖a3 and White defends) 19 ♖xf1 ♕e4+ 20 ♔c1 ♘d3+ 21 ♔d2 ♘b2 (best; 21...♕e3+ 22 ♔c2 ♖fc8 23 ♗xd4 ♕xd4 24 ♕xd3 wins for White) 22 ♕e2! (22 ♘f6+ ♔xg7 23 ♘xe4 ♘xd1 24 ♖axd1 d5 25 ♘f6 dxc3+ 26 ♔xc3 ♖ac8+ gives Black counterplay) 22...dxc3+ 23 ♗xc3 ♘c4+ 24 ♔e1 ♕xe2+ 25 ♔xe2 ♖fd8 26 ♖f6 d5 27 ♖af1!, and White should win.

20 ♖b1 *(D)*

After 20 ♗xc3, Black could safely play 20...♕xf1, as there is a path open for the king towards the queenside.





18 ♖h3

With the rook on the c-file, ...♘b4+ has become a real threat, but this is not the best defence. More resilient is 18 ♗xc4! (or 17 ♗xc4), when Black must content himself with perpetual check: 18...♕xc3+ 19 ♔b1 ♕xc4 20 ♗xh6 ♕b5+ 21 ♔a2 ♕d5+ 22 ♔b1 ♕f5+, etc. (2 bonus points if you had seen this). Attempts to play for more look very risky.

* * * *

18 ... ♕f2+

2 points.

19 ♔c1

19 ♕d2 is not really an option. Black wins easily after 19...♗b3+ 20 ♔c1 ♕xf1+ 21 ♔b2 ♕b5.

* * * *

19 ... dxc3

2 points. Most other moves are annoyingly met by 20 ♖g3!, which sets up a lethal mating-net.

* * * *

20 ... c2

2 points (plus 3 bonus points if you foresaw this when playing 18...♕f2+).

Also feasible is 20...♘b4 (2 points) 21 ♖xb4 c2 22 ♘f6+ ♔xg7 (22...♕xf6 23 ♗xf6 cxd1♕+ 24 ♔xd1 ♗xf1 25 ♖g4+ wins for White) 23 ♕g4+ ♔h8 24 ♗xc4 ♕xf6 with an unclear position.

21 ♕xc2

* * * *

21 ... ♕xf1+

1 point.

22 ♔b2

* * * *

22 ... ♕e2

2 points.

23 ♖g3

* * * *

23 ... f5

2 points. A similar line could have occurred after 20...♕xf1 (instead of

20...c2) 21 ♕xf1 ♗xf1 22 ♖g3 f5 23 ♗xh6+ but then Black would have to engage in the risky 23...♔h7 24 ♗g7 ♖f8, if he wants to win. Note also that Black wisely refrains from exchanging on c2 first (in the game), as this would force him into a similar defence, i.e. 23...♕xc2+ 24 ♔xc2 f5 25 ♗xh6+ ♔h7 26 ♗g7 ♖f8, with an unclear position.

24 ♗e5+

Here Black defends against 24 ♗xh6+ ♔h7 25 ♗g7 by 25...♕xh5 (note the difference from not exchanging on c2) 26 ♕xc4 ♘e5.

* * * *

24 ... ♔f8

2 points.

The cool 24...♔h7 (1 point) might actually be feasible, even though I hope no one has seriously considered this option.

25 ♗d6+

* * * *

25 ... ♘e7

1 point.

26 ♕xe2

If 26 ♖g7, then 26...♕xc2+ 27 ♔xc2 ♗e2+ 28 ♔d2 ♗xh5 29 ♖xe7 ♔g8 is very good for Black.

* * * *

26 ... ♗xe2

1 point.

27 ♘f4

* * * *

27 ... ♗g4

2 points. 27...♖c6 (1 point) leads to another unclear ending: 28 ♗xe7+ ♔xe7 29 ♘xe2 ♖ac8, and Black has three pawns for the knight. In contrast to the game, though, White has few problems to resolve, and could, for instance, exchange a rook with 30 ♖c1.

28 ♘g6+

* * * *

28 ... ♔f7

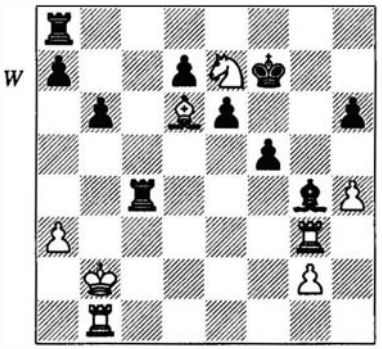
1 point.

29 ♘xe7

* * * *

29 ... ♖c4 *(D)*

2 points. Certainly not 29...♖e8? 30 ♖xg4!, intending to meet 30...fxg4? with 31 ♖f1+ ♔g7 32 ♗e5+ and mate next move.



30 h5

* * * *

30 ... ♖d4

3 points. 30...♗xh5 (1 point) is less clear. White plays 31 ♖h1, and if 31...♗g4, then 32 ♖xh6, after which the open h-file only poses problems for Black. 31...f4 is feasible but not convincing.

31 ♗e5

* * * *

31 ... ♖d2+

3 points. 31...♖e4 (2 points) is a tempting alternative. The position of the rook is clearly improved if White returns the bishop to d6 but White plays the stronger 32 ♘g6. Then 32...♗xh5 is critical. 33 ♘f4 ♗g4 is fine for Black but an original and unclear position arises after 33 ♘h8+! ♔e7 34 ♖g7+ ♔f8 35 ♗f6. Black has four pawns for the knight but it is not clear how Black is going to improve his position. Pawn moves could easily just weaken Black's position while the bishop is obliged to stay on the e8-h5 diagonal.

32 ♔c3

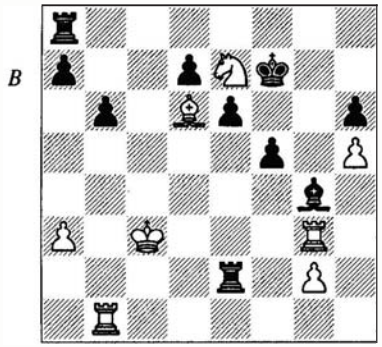
* * * *

32 ... ♖e2

2 points.

33 ♗d6 *(D)*

White could also try 33 ♘g6. Then 33...♗xh5 34 ♔d3 ♖e4 35 ♘h8+ ♔e7 36 ♖g7+ ♔f8 37 ♗f6 leads to an unclear position, but 33...♖c8+ 34 ♔d3 ♖e4 35 ♗d6 ♔f6 looks good for Black (I don't see how White can untangle his bishop and knight), and moving the king in the other direction (34 ♔b3) surely doesn't improve White's position.



* * * *

33 ... e5

4 points. Obviously, Black must be careful about moving his central pawns but this is the right time to do so. Actually, it is also difficult to see what else Black is supposed to do, since White was even threatening 34 ♖xg4!. Hence, 33...♖e8? is a mistake due to 34 ♖xg4! fxg4 35 ♖f1+ ♔g7 36 ♔d3!, and White wins since Black cannot move his e2-rook away from the e-file due to 37 ♗e5+ ♔h7 38 ♖f7#.

33...♖e4?! (to rule out the ♖xg4 idea) is met by 34 ♖b4!. After a rook exchange, Black's remaining rook is severely restricted by White's minor pieces, which provides White with excellent chances, and returning the rook to e2 has even more fatal consequences: 34...♖e2? 35 ♖gxg4! fxg4 36 ♖f4+ ♔e8 (36...♔g7 37 ♔d3) 37 ♘g6, and White wins.

34 ♘g6

34 ♘d5 ♖c8+ 35 ♘c7 ♔f6! would also have been very good for Black.

* * * *

34 ... ♔e6

2 points.

35 ♗xe5

* * * *

35 ... ♖c8+

2 points. This move also receives 2 points if played on the previous move. Actually, that is perhaps even more precise, as then White wouldn't have the option of moving his king towards the centre.

36 ♔d4

* * * *

36 ... ♖e4+

2 points.

37 ♔d3

* * * *

37 ... ♖xe5

1 point. If you chose 35...♖xe5 (instead of 35...♖c8+) you can add 1 point. Of course this wouldn't have been a bad move but it is much better first to bring the queen's rook into the game.

38 ♘xe5

* * * *

38 ... ♔xe5

1 point.

39 ♖e3+

* * * *

39 ... ♔f6

2 points.

40 ♖be1

* * * *

40 ... ♖c5

3 points. Another excellent idea is 40...♖c6 (3 points), intending to meet 41 ♖e7 with 41...♖d6+ followed by 42...♗xh5.

The immediate 40...♗xh5 would, however, make the win problematic, as after 41 ♖e7 White has excellent counterplay.

41 ♔d4

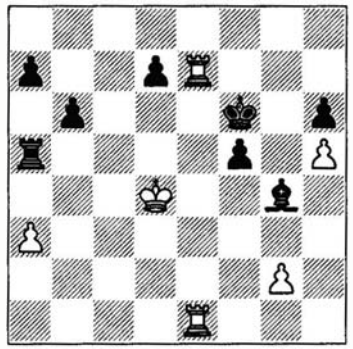
* * * *

41 ... ♖a5

2 points. 41...♖c2 (2 points), targeting the g2-pawn, is also good. While White only has the d7-pawn to attack, Black can actually go for either of White's pawns, with the h5-pawn being the easiest one to collect. If Black managed to take the h5-pawn and transfer the bishop to e6, White would be deprived of any counterplay, and it would only be a question of time before the struggle was over.

42 ♖e7 *(D)*

B



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42 ... ♖a4+

3 points. The idea behind this check will become clear in a few moves. 42...♗xh5 43 ♖xd7 ♖xa3 44 ♖ee7 only gives White unnecessary counterplay.

43 ♔d5

* * * *

43 ... ♗xh5

3 points. 43...f4 (1 point) 44 ♖7e4 ♗e6+ 45 ♔d6 ♖xa3 46 ♖xf4+ ♔g5 is still better for Black but again White is unnecessarily active. The key move is, after 47 ♖f3, 47...♖a5!, as here a rook exchange would clearly favour White. On the previous move, 42...f4 43 ♖7e4 ♖a4+ comes to the same thing, and thus also merits 1 point.

44 ♖xd7

* * * *

44 ... ♗f7+

2 points.

45 ♔c6

* * * *

45 ... ♖xa3

2 points.

46 ♖ee7

* * * *

46 ... ♖c3+

2 points.

47 ♔b7

* * * *

47 ... ♗e6

2 points.

48 ♖c7

* * * *

48 ... ♗d5+

2 points. 48...♖xc7+ 49 ♖xc7 ♗d5+ makes no difference. The point of 42...♖a4+ is now clear. White's king has been lured too far forward to be able to cope with Black's kingside pawns. After a rook exchange, Black wins easily with his two pawns on the kingside. Here is the rest of the game:

49 ♔xa7 ♖xc7+ 50 ♖xc7 ♗xg2 51 ♖c2 ♗e4 52 ♖h2 ♔g5 53 ♔xb6 h5 54 ♔c5 h4 55 ♔d4 ♔g4 56 ♔e5 h3 0-1

After, for example, 57 ♖a2, Black would continue 57...♗g2, followed by ...f4-f3 and ...h2-h1♕.

Evaluation scheme

75-88	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
60-74	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
50-59	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
35-49	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-34	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 2

Our next game features an entertaining attack by none other than the master of attack, Mikhail Tal.

Tal's style was based upon great calculating skills but his greatest ability was his *intuition*. Often Tal would launch an attack that later analysis showed not to be entirely correct. However, during a tense over-the-board struggle his opponents were rarely able to repel it.

Tal played many such games but I like the present one for its complexity and clearness at the same time, so fire up your guns, and begin attacking with the Magician from Riga.

You are White and we begin from the diagram, i.e. with White's 7th move.

Tal – Flesch
Lvov 1981
Caro-Kann

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♘f3 ♘gf6 6 ♘g3 e6 *(D)*

W

The variation employed by Tal in this game is not seen very often in present-day tournament practice but it is a line he played on occasion throughout his career.

* * * *

7 ♗d3

2 points. The main idea of White's 6th move is to avoid exchanges. The second purpose of the knight retreat is to begin looking for a kingside attack. This may sound a bit early as neither side has yet finished developing but White's best set-up is aimed at the prospect of Black castling kingside. 7 ♗d3 fits in best in this respect but you also receive 1 point if you chose 7 ♗e2 or 7 ♗c4. Both are sensible developing moves but don't have the sting of 7 ♗d3. In general White should develop his light-squared bishop before the dark-squared one in this line. The reason is that by doing so White prepares castling, and it is not yet clear where the dark-squared bishop should operate from.

7 ... c5

* * * *

8 c3

2 points. This is mainly designed to avoid 8 0-0 (1 point) 8...cxd4 9 ♘xd4 ♘c5, which gives Black good chances of equality.

8 ... cxd4

* * * *

9 ♘xd4

2 points. This is better than 9 cxd4 (1 point), which leaves Black with a rather comfortable IQP position after 9...♗b4+ 10 ♗d2 ♕a5.

9 ... ♗c5

9...♘c5 10 ♗c2 is pleasant for White, who firmly controls the centre while his minor piece are eyeing the kingside.

* * * *

10 0-0

2 points.

10 ... ♗xd4

This is the generally recommended path for Black but it is also worth considering simply castling.

* * * *

11 cxd4

1 point. If you didn't like the look of having an isolated queen's pawn, 10 ♗c2 (1 point) would have been a sensible way to avoid it.

11 ... 0-0

* * * *

12 ♗g5

2 points. This is very natural as White hopes to be able to intensify the pin with a later ♘h5 or ♘e4. However, often in such positions White waits to see Black's set-up before committing the bishop. Hence, 12 ♖e1 and 12 ♕e2 are good alternatives and also get 2 points.

12 ... h6

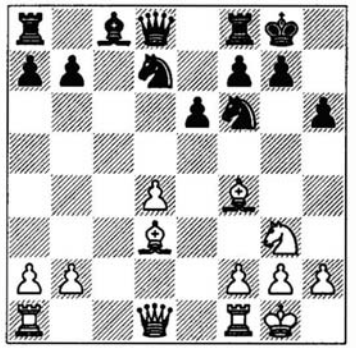
Black breaks the pin at once but also weakens his kingside. 12...♕a5 should be considered. White then has a choice between 13 ♗d2, 13 ♗f4 and even 13 h4!?.

* * * *

13 ♗f4 *(D)*

2 points. This is much better than the aimless 13 ♗e3. From f4 the bishop controls the e5-square and may even be planning to occupy it at a later stage.

B



13 ... ♘b6

* * * *

14 ♗c2

3 points. A clever prophylactic move, planning to meet 14...♘fd5? with 15 ♕d3! (if this was your idea, take 1 bonus point).

14 ♕d2 (1 point) looks sensible but after 14...♘fd5 White's best is probably to force a draw with 15 ♗xh6 gxh6 16 ♕xh6.

14 ♖e1 also gets 1 point but after 14...♘fd5 White would have to retreat his bishop to d2.

14 ... ♘bd5

* * * *

15 ♗e5

2 points. Take 1 point more if you wanted to play 14 ♗e5 on your last move. However, this wouldn't have been as accurate as the text-move, as Black wouldn't have been forced to reply 14...♘bd5. Instead, 14...♗d7, with the idea of ...♗c6, is good, whereas after 14 ♗c2!, Black is not in time for the ...♗d7-c6 manoeuvre, as 14...♗d7 is met by 15 ♕d3 ♗c6 16 ♘h5!.

15 ... ♕b6

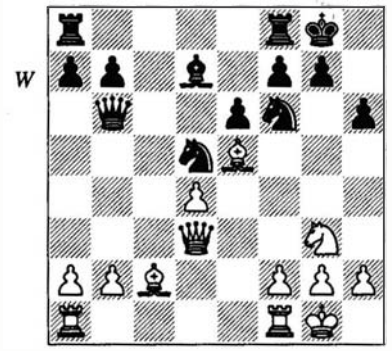
* * * *

16 ♕d3

4 points. Very provocative. 16 ♕d2 (1 point) is a more mundane way of defending the b2-pawn but would rather limit White's options later on.

16 ... ♘b4

Black takes up the gauntlet. The alternative 16...♖d8 17 ♘e4 is pleasant for White, but *what would you play in the event of 16...♗d7 (D)?*



With 16...♗d7 Black is threatening ...♗b5. However, White can then launch a direct attack with 17 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 18 ♘h5 (1 point) 18...♖fd8 19 ♘xf6+ gxf6 20 ♕h7+ ♔f8 and now 21 d5! (2 more points if you saw this far) looks very dangerous for Black.

* * * *

17 ♕d2

2 points. 17 ♕f3? isn't good, in view of 17...♘xc2 18 ♗xf6 e5!, when Black has a clear advantage.

17 ... ♘xc2

* * * *

18 ♗xf6

3 points. Here is where good intuition is needed. It's very difficult to calculate the forthcoming variations down to positions that are easy to assess.

18 ♕xc2 (1 point) wouldn't give Black much to worry about after the reply 18...♘d5.

Black could have avoided the text-move by playing 17...♘fd5? but then 18 ♗xg7! ♔xg7 19 ♘h5+ ♔g8 20 ♕xh6 would have won. However, 17...♘g4 is a very interesting defence. There are 3 bonus points to collect if you had considered this and intended to try 18 ♗xg7! ♔xg7 19 ♘h5+ ♔g8 and now 20 h3!? or 20 ♗d1, which both lead to complex positions.

18 ... ♘xa1

Not 18...gxf6? 19 ♕xh6 with ♘h5 to follow.

* * * *

19 ♘h5

2 points. It would be too time-consuming to begin capturing the knight. White has to be quick on the kingside. The good thing is that the black knight is not going to escape from the corner, so there will always be some material to recoup.

19 ... e5

* * * *

20 dxe5

2 points. 20 ♗xg7?! fails after 20...♕g6! 21 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 22 ♘g3 ♘c2 23 dxe5 ♗e6 ∓.

20 ... g5

* * * *

21 e6 *(D)*

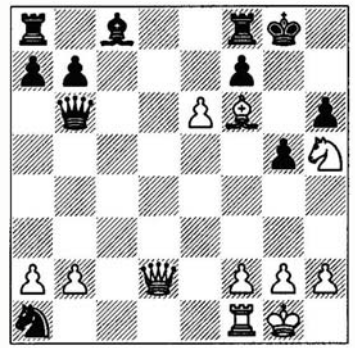
4 points. Black was ready to play 21...♗g4. The text-move is a sneaky

way of interrupting Black's planned defence.

If White plays 21 ♖xa1 (1 point), then 21...♗g4 22 ♘g3 ♖fd8!? gives Black plenty of counterplay.

21 ♗e7 (2 points) is a major alternative, also preventing ...♗g4, but then Black is doing fine after 21...♗f5! 22 ♘f6+ ♔g7 23 ♖xa1 (or 23 ♗xf8+ ♖xf8 24 ♖xa1 ♖d8 with counterplay) 23...♖fd8 24 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 25 ♕e2 (25 ♕c3 ♖d3!) 25...♗d3. It's interesting that in these lines Black does best to give up an exchange to get rid of White's bishop, rather than trying to hang on to material.

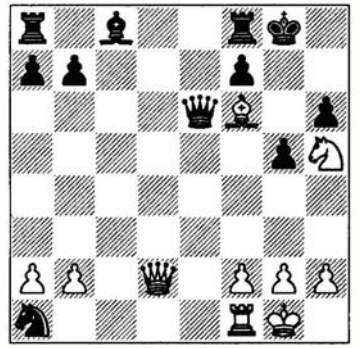
A final interesting option is 21 ♗xg5 (1 point) with the idea of meeting 21...♕g6 with 22 ♗xh6 ♕xh5 23 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 24 f4, when White will get the a1-knight and will then have three pawns for a piece. Black's king position is a bit airy but with the pawns well blockaded by the bishop I see no reason why Black should have problems in this line.



21 ... ♕xe6 *(D)*

If 21...♗xe6, 22 ♗xg5 is strong. In comparison with the last note, Black has lost the ...♕g6 option.

21...fxe6? is even worse, due to 22 ♕d3!, when White wins (1 bonus point if you saw this idea). A likely continuation is 22...♖xf6 23 ♘xf6+ ♔f7 24 ♘h5! ♕xb2 25 ♕h7+ ♔e8 26 ♖d1 +−.



* * * *

22 h3

1 point.

This was praised by Tal, but it looks like White could do even better. The idea is apparently that he wanted to prevent ...♕g4, since after, for example, 22 ♖xa1, Black could defend with 22...♕g4! 23 ♘g3 ♕f4!?.

However, White has the much better 22 ♗c3! (3 points), when it is not clear how Black can ever get out. Black has to do something about the a1-h8 diagonal and after 22...f6 23 ♖xa1, White is already threatening 24 ♖e1. The pressure is in any case very awkward for Black.

22 ... ♕f5

Tal thought that Black might be able to get away with 22...b6!?, meeting 23 ♖e1 with 23...♕f5!. I think White should still try 23 ♗c3 but it is certainly a worse version than on the previous move.

* * * *

23 ♖xa1

2 points. White could also play for a draw with 23 ♗e7 or 23 ♗g7 (1 point for both moves) but the text-move is far better.

23 ... ♗e6

* * * *

24 ♖e1

2 points.

24 ... ♕g6

* * * *

25 g4

1 point.

25 ... ♖ac8

25...♖fc8!? might be prudent.

* * * *

26 ♗c3

2 points. This retreat has been in the air for several moves.

26 ♗e7 (1 point) is also feasible but it is not clear that White has any clever discovered check after 26...♖c2 27 ♕d4 ♖a8 28 ♘f6+ ♔h8.

26 ... ♖fd8

* * * *

27 ♕e3

1 point. Also 1 point for 27 ♕e2.

27 ... ♖d3

* * * *

28 ♕e5

2 points. White might also be able to get away with the greedy 28 ♕xa7 but I assume only a computer would seriously consider such a move. It would certainly not recommend it, but on the other hand I feel obliged to give it 1 point as I cannot refute it!

28 ... ♖cxc3

* * * *

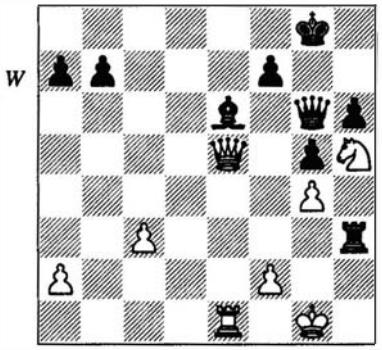
29 bxc3

1 point.

29 ... ♔h7

Maybe Black was in time-trouble around here. The text is a typical passing move, which can hardly ruin anything, but neither does it do any good.

29...♖xh3 (D) is the critical test. What would you do in that case?



White wins with 30 ♖d1! ♔h7 31 ♘f6+ ♔g7 32 ♘e4+! ♔h7 33 ♖d8 ♕g7 34 ♘f6+ ♔g6 35 ♖g8. 3 extra points if you saw up to 33 ♖d8.

* * * *

30 ♘f6+

2 points.

30 ... ♔g7

30...♔h8 is more prudent.

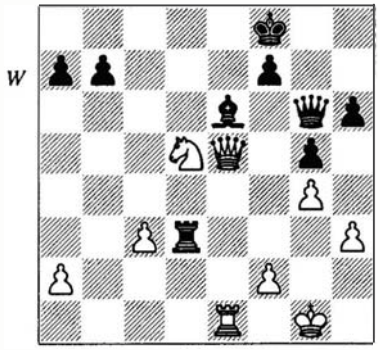
* * * *

31 ♘d5+

1 point. 31 ♘d7+ (3 points) is simpler, e.g. 31...♔g8 32 ♕b8+ ♔g7 33 ♕f8+ ♔h7 34 ♘e5 with a clear win for White.

31 ... ♔h7

Can you find a winning idea after the much stronger 31...♔f8 (D)?



Tal points out that White wins with 32 ♕b8+ (32 ♕h8+?! ♕g8 and after 33 ♕xh6+ ♕g7 Black defends, while in the event of 33 ♕f6 Black can simply play 33...♗xd5! 34 ♕xh6+ ♕g7 35 ♖e8+ ♔xe8 36 ♕xg7 ♖d1+ 37 ♔h2 ♖h1+ 38 ♔g3 ♖g1+ with a draw) 32...♔g7 33 ♘e7 ♕h7 34 ♕e5+ ♔f8 35 ♘f5! (seeing up to this should suffice; 3 points) 35...♗xf5 36 gxf5 ♔g8 37 f6 ♕g6 38 ♕e8+ ♔h7 39 ♖e7 and wins.

* * * *

32 ♘e7

2 points. White wins a rook by 33 ♕e4+.

1-0

Evaluation scheme

63-70	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
56-62	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
46-55	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
36-45	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-35	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 3

Ex-World Champion Anatoly Karpov has played a great many memorable games. The following is one of them. It was awarded the prize for "best game of the tournament". See if you can play as skilfully as Karpov. You are White and we begin after Black's 9th move.

Karpov – Sax
Linares 1983
Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 d6 6 g4 h6 7 ♖g1 ♗e7 8 ♗e3 ♘c6 9 ♕e2 ♗d7 *(D)*

* * * *

10 h4

3 points. White's plan is not very difficult to conceive but move-orders play a significant role. Here Karpov rejected 10 0-0-0 (1 point) because of 10...♘xd4! 11 ♗xd4 e5 12 ♗e3 ♖c8, when White must take into account the standard exchange sacrifice ...♖xc3 followed by ...♘xe4. Karpov is of course alert to such things and hence the text-move is both an attacking and a prophylactic move, as White intends to drive away the black knight with g5.

10 ... ♘xd4

* * * *

11 ♗xd4

1 point.

11 ... e5

* * * *

12 ♗e3

1 point.

12 ... ♗c6

This is the logical move. After 12...♖c8 White plays 13 g5 with the better position. Black does not have full compensation for the exchange after 13...hxg5 (Black's prospects are not improved by omitting this exchange) 14 hxg5 ♖xc3 15 gxf6 ♖xe3 16 ♕xe3.

* * * *

13 ♕d3

3 points. White protects the e4-pawn and simultaneously increases his control of d5. 14 g5 is becoming a positional threat, which forces Black to do something. Incidentally, 13 f3 would be wrong, in view of 13...♘h7!, threatening the h4-pawn, and hence more or less forcing White to sacrifice it, since 14 h5 would be a horribly anti-positional move. 13 ♗g2 (2 points) is feasible and certainly the next best option. It does sort of stand in the way of the rook but this doesn't seem to matter very much. White's control of the important d5-square is again increased, and if White at some point manages to open the h-file it will

perhaps be possible to swap rooks with ♖h1.

13 ... ♕a5

The beginning of an interesting plan. Black can again try the 13...♘h7 plan but Karpov believes that at this point White is better after 14 g5 hxg5 15 ♘d5!, because Black's pieces don't coordinate well.

* * * *

14 0-0-0

2 points. This is almost forced in view of the threat to the e4-pawn.

14 ... ♘xe4

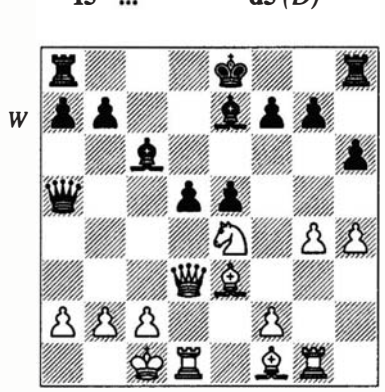
This was Sax's idea when playing 13...♕a5, and is a good practical chance. If White were allowed simply to push the knight away with 15 g5, he would be much better.

* * * *

15 ♘xe4

1 point.

15 ... d5 *(D)*



At this moment Black only has one pawn for the knight but the white knight cannot safely retreat, as Black is ready to follow up with ...d4. Also, there is a problem with defending the a-pawn.

* * * *

16 ♕b3 *(D)*

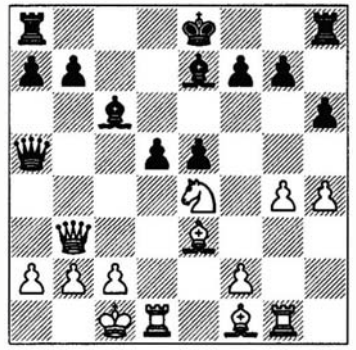
4 points. This is an excellent solution to the problem and had clearly been underestimated or even entirely overlooked by Sax. The following list of possibilities shows that White could easily go astray here:

a) 16 ♘c3 (1 point) 16...d4 17 ♗xd4 exd4 (curiously in *Chess at the Top*, Karpov gives 17...♖d8??, claiming that "Black regains his material and has at least equal chances", but totally misses that White in fact holds on to the piece with 18 ♕f5!) 18 ♕xd4 0-0 and Black has good compensation for the pawn.

b) 16 ♘g3 d4 and now 17 ♗d2 ♕xa2 is very good for Black; 17 ♗xd4 is probably better but certainly not convincing.

c) 16 ♘d2 ♕xa2 17 ♘b3 a5 is similarly very dangerous for White.

d) 16 ♕d2 ♕xa2 (16...♕xd2+ 17 ♘xd2 d4 regains the piece and is also good) 17 ♘c3 ♕a1+ 18 ♘b1 d4 ∓.



16 ... dxe4

* * * *

17 ♗c4

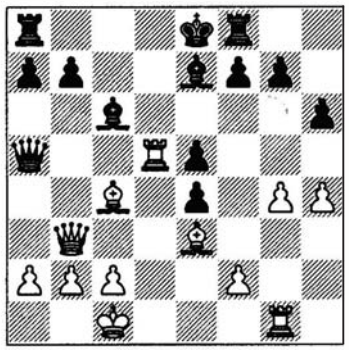
2 points.

17 ... ♖f8

17...0-0 looks risky in view of 18 g5 hxg5 19 ♗xg5.

* * * *

18 ♖d5 *(D)*



5 points. Definitely the most difficult move of the game. It more or less forces Black to part with his light-squared bishop, and this gives White good chances of exploiting his control of the light squares. However, the light squares are not White's only advantage. Many of Black's pawns are weak and his kingside is crippled. All this, only at the cost of an exchange.

Those not willing to run the risk of sacrificing further material might have chosen the more prosaic 18 ♗d5 (2 points) or 18 g5 (2 points), when White is slightly better.

18 ... ♗xd5

If 18...♕c7, White has a choice between 19 ♗b5 and 19 ♖gd1.

* * * *

19 ♗xd5

1 point.

19 ... ♖d8

This looks very natural but perhaps Black ought to try 19...♕b4 20 ♗xb7 ♕xb3 21 axb3 ♖b8. Then 22 ♗c6+ ♔d8 23 ♗xa7 ♖b4! 24 c3 ♖xb3 25 ♗d5 ♖b5 26 ♗c6 is probably just equal but White should try 22 ♗xe4, when 22...♗xh4 23 ♗xa7 ♗g5+ 24 ♔b1 ♖c8 25 b4! is good for White.

* * * *

20 ♗c4

4 points. Another fine move, and again vintage Karpov. Both 20 ♗xb7 (1 point) and 20 ♗xe4 (1 point) would permit 20...♗c5, exchanging the dark-squared bishops and thus assuring Black's king a somewhat safer existence.

20 ... ♗b4

* * * *

21 c3

2 points.

21 ... b5

Another option is 21...♗d6 22 ♕xb7 ♕c7 but White keeps an advantage after both 23 ♕xe4 and 23 ♕xc7 ♗xc7 24 ♗xa7.

* * * *

22 ♗e2

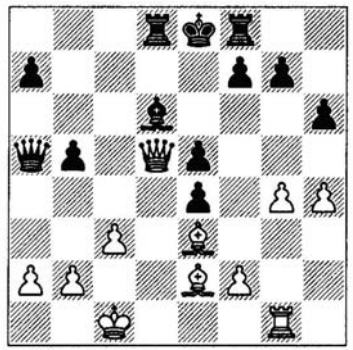
2 points. There is no need to invite complications with 22 cxb4 bxc4.

22 ... ♗d6

* * * *

23 ♕d5 *(D)*

3 points. 23 ♗xb5+ ♔e7 merely helps Black, but 23 g5 (2 points) is interesting, with the point that 23...hxg5 is met by 24 ♗xb5+ ♔e7 25 ♗xg5+ f6 26 ♗e3 ♖f7 27 ♗c4 ♖b8 28 ♕c2 f5 and now either 29 ♖g5 or 29 ♖g6, maintaining some pressure.



23 ... ♔e7

23...♕c7 is probably Black's best defence. 2 bonus points if you saw 23...♕xc3+, and were ready to meet it simply with 24 ♔b1 ♕xb2+ 25 ♔xb2 ♗a3+ 26 ♔xa3 ♖xd5, when Black has three pawns and a rook for two bishops but is nevertheless on the verge of defeat since most of his pawns are weak.

* * * *

24 ♗c5

2 points. Now Black faces the awkward threat of 25 ♕xe5+.

24 ... ♗xc5

24...f6? loses to 25 ♗c4, which creates mating threats.

* * * *

25 ♕xe5+

2 points.

25 ... ♔d7

* * * *

26 ♕xc5

1 point.

26 ... ♕c7

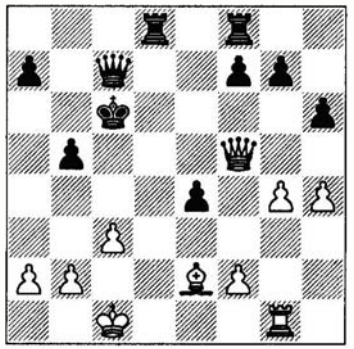
* * * *

27 ♕f5+

2 points. Matters are far less clear after 27 ♗xb5+ as Black's king escapes via c8.

27 ... ♔e7

How would you continue the attack in the event of 27...♔c6 (D)?



28 ♕xb5+ ♔d6 isn't difficult to predict but then 29 ♕b4+! (3 points) is the right continuation. Black has two options:

a) 29...♔e5 30 f4+! ♔xf4 (30...exf3 31 ♗xf3 should also be a win for White) 31 ♖f1+ ♔e3 32 c4! (Karpov only gives 32 ♗b5 but then Black can put up a fight with 32...♕d6) wins.

b) 29...♕c5 30 ♕xe4 (if 30 ♕b7 ♔e5 31 ♖e1, Black can try 31...g6!?) 30...♔c7 31 ♗f3 ♕b6 32 ♕e7+ ♔b8 33 ♖e1 ±.

* * * *

28 ♕xe4+

1 point.

28 ... ♔d7

* * * *

29 ♕f5+

2 points.

29 g5 (1 point) is also good but Black is still alive after 29...♕b6 30 ♖d1+ ♔c8 31 ♗g4+ ♔b8 32 ♕e5+ ♔b7.

29 ... ♔e7

* * * *

30 ♖e1

2 points. This is more accurate than 30 ♗xb5 (1 point).

30 ... ♖d6

* * * *

31 ♗c4+

2 points. It is important that Black is not allowed to simplify with ...♖e6.

31 ... ♔d8

* * * *

32 ♗xb5

2 points. 32 ♕xb5 (1 point) is also not bad but it is more logical to keep the queen on f5, where it prevents the black king from escaping further towards the queenside.

32 ... a6

* * * *

33 ♗a4

2 points. White should keep control of the a4-e8 diagonal.

33 ... g6

* * * *

34 ♕f3

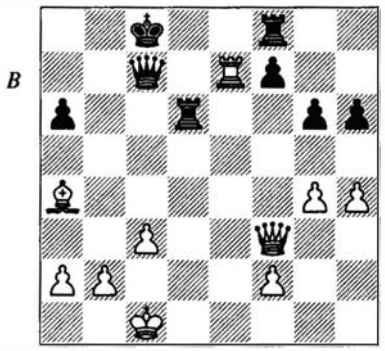
3 points. 34 ♕f4 (1 point) is also good but the text-move is sneakier (in fact it sets a cunning trap) and is also more in accordance with the overall strategic accomplishment of this game, viz. playing on the light squares.

34 ... ♔c8

34...♕c5 or 34...♕c4 is more tenacious.

* * * *

35 ♖e7 *(D)*



4 points. A fine conclusion to the game.

35 ... ♖d1+

35...♕xe7 36 ♕a8+ ♔c7 37 ♕a7+ ♔d8 38 ♕b8# is mate!

* * * *

36 ♔xd1

2 points. 36 ♗xd1 (1 point) also wins but the text-move is the most accurate.

36 ... ♕xe7

On 36...♖d8+, 37 ♖d7 is simplest.

* * * *

37 ♕a8+

1 point.

37 ... ♔c7

* * * *

38 ♕a7+

1 point.

38 ... ♔d6

* * * *

39 ♕b6+

1 point.

1-0

There is mate in two more moves.

Evaluation scheme

57-69	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
50-56	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
40-49	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
30-39	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-29	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 4

Here is a chance to test yourself in a more positional game, where you also have to show good technique.

Korchnoi's way of playing against the hanging pawns in the Queen's Gambit is well known but certainly instructive.

You are White and we begin after Black's 10th move.

Korchnoi – Spassky
Clermont-Ferrand 1989
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗g5 ♗e7 5 e3 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 ♖c1 b6 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♘xd5 exd5 10 ♗xe7 ♕xe7 *(D)*

W

* * * *

11 ♗d3

1 point. At this stage, White has many options and the choice of move is largely a matter of taste. A few of them, such as 11 ♘e2 (1 point) and 11 ♗e2 (1 point), are aimed at preventing ...c5 but Black is often able to carry this out anyway. The text-move is the long-time preference of Korchnoi and this should count for something. White's bishop appears more aggressive on d3 than on e2, and sometimes White is able to provoke a further weakening of Black's kingside by lining up the queen and bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal. There is also 1 point for 11 g3, with the idea of exerting pressure on the d5-pawn, but generally I would prefer more rapid development. Black can then choose where to develop his bishop: 11...♗f5, with the idea of ...♗e4, or 11...♗a6!?.

There are no points if you chose 11 ♕c2 and thought that you had prevented ...c5. Black would then play 11...c5! anyway, and in the event of 12 dxc5, grab the initiative with 12...d4!.

Finally, it is worth mentioning 11 ♘f3, which certainly does no harm and hence deserves 1 point.

11 ... c5

* * * *

12 ♘e2

1 point. 12 ♘f3 (1 point) is a sensible alternative. The same position could indeed have arisen if White had played ♘f3 earlier, for example on move 7.

12 ... ♘d7

* * * *

13 0-0

2 points.

13 ... ♗b7

* * * *

14 ♕a4

3 points. This is a typical queen sortie in these Tartakower positions.

White aims to provoke Black into an early decision about how to arrange his queenside. Furthermore, White is looking for a useful deployment for the queen outside the centre. I will give 1 point for 14 ♘f4 or 14 ♘g3. Both seem very natural because White would be quite happy for Black to exchange on d4: this would often lead to a slightly better position for White because his bishop is superior to Black's. On the other hand, the knight is not very influential on the kingside. 14 ♘g3 is met simply by 14...g6 and 14 ♘f4 by 14...♘f6. 14 b3!? (1 point) is not such a bad move either. A ...c4 advance is prevented and hence White can choose when or if he will saddle Black with hanging pawns (by playing dxc5). The disadvantage with this is that the queen is not ideally placed on d1 and Black would have few problems supporting his hanging pawns. Moreover, he can quickly improve the position of his knight by ...♘f6-e4.

14 ... ♘f6

Black is now planning ...c4. The immediate 14...c4 is premature in view of 15 ♗f5! ♘f6 16 b3 with the better position for White, while 14...a6 15 ♗f5! ♘f6 16 ♕a3 g6 17 ♗h3 ♘e4 18 dxc5 ♘xc5 19 ♕b4! is also very good for White, as in Korchnoi-Beliavsky, Tilburg 1986.

* * * *

15 dxc5

2 points. White immediately defines the character of the forthcoming middlegame by giving Black hanging pawns. If White is looking to keep the tension, both 15 b3!? (1 point) and 15 ♕a3!? (1 point) are sensible alternatives.

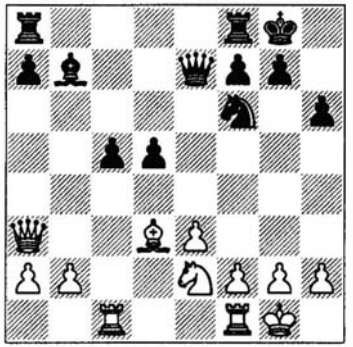
15 ... bxc5

* * * *

16 ♕a3 *(D)*

2 points. Take note of the queen manoeuvre ♕d1-a4-a3, which is a very typical way of exerting pressure against the hanging pawns in this kind of position. Another way of increasing the pressure against the c-pawn is 16 b3!? (2 points) with the idea of ♕a5.

B



16 ... ♖fc8

* * * *

17 ♖c3

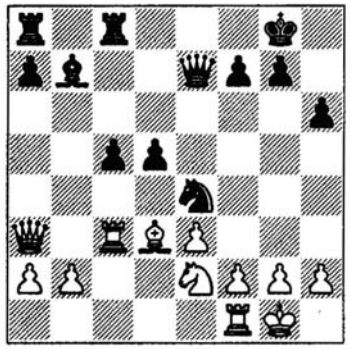
3 points. It is a very natural idea to double rooks on the c-file but it is important that White takes care with the implementation of the plan. For example, after 17 ♖c2 (1 point) White lacks an important retreat for the bishop, and this allows Black to equalize easily with 17...♔f8! 18 ♖fc1 c4 19 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 20 ♗f5 ♖c6 21 ♘d4 ♖a6 22 a3 g6 23 ♗h3, when 23...♖b8, 23...♖b6 and 23...♗c8 all look fine for Black.

17 ♘d4 is pointless, because the knight has nowhere in particular to go from here. Black is doing very well after 17...♕f8 18 ♘f5 g6 19 ♘g3 c4 20 ♕xf8+ ♔xf8 21 ♗c2 ♗a6.

17 ... ♘e4 *(D)*

If we compare with 17 ♖c2 in the note to White's last move, there is a big difference in the line 17...♔f8 18 ♖fc1 c4 19 ♕xe7+ ♔xe7 20 ♗f5 ♖c6 21 ♘d4 ♖a6 22 a3 g6 because White can now play 23 ♗c2 with the idea of 24 b4!.

W



* * * *

18 ♗xe4

1 point. The knight really has to be removed.

18 ... ♕xe4

18...dxe4 19 ♖fc1 is very comfortable for White.

* * * *

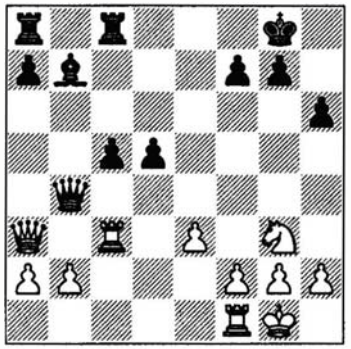
19 ♘g3

2 points. White does well to avoid 19 ♖xc5?, which is much too risky in view of 19...♖xc5! 20 ♕xc5 d4 21 f3 (21 ♘f4 g5 −+) 21...♕xe3+ 22 ♖f2 ♖c8 23 ♕xa7 ♗d5. In fact, this might be extremely difficult for White to defend.

19 ... ♕e5

How would you have reacted to 19...♕b4 (D)?

W



Two points if you intended either 20 ♘f5!? ♕xa3 21 ♖xa3 ♖c7 22 ♖c1 or 20 ♕xb4 cxb4 21 ♖cc1! (but not 21 ♖xc8+?!, which concedes the c-file and allows Black too much counterplay with 21...♖xc8 22 ♘f5 ♖c2 23 ♖b1 ♖d2! 24 ♘d4 ♗a6) with an edge in both cases.

* * * *

20 ♖xc5

2 points.

A different but equally good way of obtaining an advantage is 20 ♖fc1 (2 points), threatening to win the c-pawn, and hence almost forcing 20...c4, after which 21 ♘e2 looks pleasant for White.

20 ... ♖xc5

* * * *

21 ♕xc5

1 point.

21 ... ♕xb2

* * * *

22 ♘f5 *(D)*

B

2 points. Knight and queen combine to make a very potent attacking force. With this White introduces the possibility of a quick attack; for example, if 22...♕xa2, then 23 ♕d4 f6 24 ♕g4 is decisive. Take 2 bonus points if you foresaw 22 ♘f5 when playing 20 ♖xc5.

22 ... ♗a6

* * * *

23 ♕c6

3 points. 23 ♕xd5 (1 point) might be feasible but looks rather risky; for example, 23...♖b8 24 ♖e1 (24 ♖d1 ♗e2 25 ♖e1? ♕c3 −+) 24...♕b1 25 ♕a5 ♖b5 26 ♘e7+ ♔h7 27 ♕d2 ♖b2 ∓.

Note that it would definitely be unwise to insert 23 ♘e7+ ♔h8 before embarking on the above, in view of 24 ♕xd5 ♖b8 25 ♖e1? ♕b4, with a double attack on the knight and rook.

23 ... ♗b7

* * * *

24 ♕d6

2 points. 24 ♕c7 or 24 ♕d7 also deserves 2 points but only if your idea was to repeat the position in the event of 24...♗a6, i.e. 25 ♕c6.

24 ... ♔h7

* * * *

25 h4

3 points. Since White has attacking ideas on the kingside, this move serves a double purpose, as it is also very useful to give the king an escape-square. 25 h3 gets 1 point.

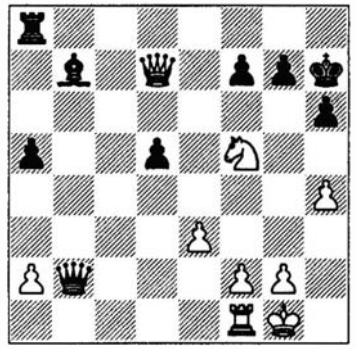
25 ... a5

* * * *

26 ♕d7 *(D)*

2 points. It is logical to improve the position of the queen as it is no longer preventing ...♗a6. From d7, the queen attacks f7 and can become active on both wings. 26 ♕c7 (2 points), with the same purpose of attacking f7 but also keeping an eye on the a5-pawn, is also good. 26 ♕f4 (1 point), with the idea of 27 ♕d4, is safe but objectively White couldn't then hope for much of an advantage.

B



26 ... ♖f8

* * * *

27 ♖d1

1 point. Rather surprisingly, this is probably inaccurate. 2 points for 27 ♘e7. Then, following 27...♗a6, 28 ♕f5+ g6 29 ♘xg6 fxg6 30 ♕xf8 ♗xf1 31 ♕f7+ ♔h8 32 ♔xf1 ♕b5+! 33 ♔g1 ♕b1+ 34 ♔h2 ♕xa2 probably enables Black to hold on to a draw, but 28 ♖d1 should offer White a slight edge.

27 ... ♗a8

* * * *

28 ♖d4

No points for this mistake. White should play 28 a4!? (2 points) with the idea of 29 ♖d4 ±, or even better 28 ♕e7! (3 points). After 28...♔g8 29 ♕c5! (2 bonus points if this was part of your idea with 28 ♕e7!), White has a large advantage:

a) 29...♕b4 30 ♕xb4 axb4 31 ♖b1 ♖b8 32 ♘d4, intending 33 ♘c2, wins a pawn for White.

b) 29...♖e8 30 ♘d6 ♖f8 31 ♕xa5 ♕f6 32 ♕b4 ♖d8 33 ♘b5 ±.

c) 29...a4 30 ♕d4 a3 31 ♕xb2 axb2 32 ♖b1 ♖b8 33 ♘d4 and again White rounds up the pawn with 34 ♘b3.

Incidentally, 27...♕c2! would have been a much better defence for Black, and leaves White searching in vain for an advantage.

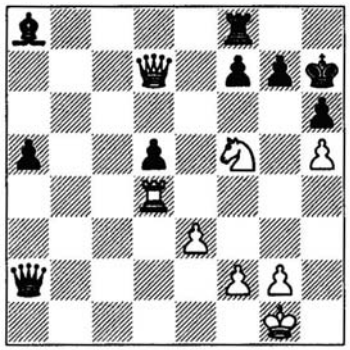
28 ... ♕xa2

* * * *

29 h5 *(D)*

3 points. 29 ♖g4 g6 30 ♘d6 (2 points) also offers White some compensation. It is likely that Korchnoi had missed that after 29 ♕e7 Black has the defensive queen manoeuvre 29...♕b1+ 30 ♔h2 ♕b8+.

B



29 ... ♗c6

* * * *

30 ♕e7

2 points. 30 ♕xc6 ♕b1+ 31 ♔h2 ♕xf5 is better for Black, and 30 ♕d6 is no good either, due to 30...♕b1+ 31 ♔h2 ♕b8.

30 ... ♕b1+

* * * *

31 ♔h2

1 point.

31 ... ♕xf5

Black can keep a small advantage with 31...♕b8+ 32 g3 ♕e8 33 ♕d6 f6.

* * * *

32 ♕xf8

1 point.

32 ... ♕xh5+

If 32...♕xf2, 33 ♖g4 ♕f6 34 ♖f4 ♕e5 35 ♕xf7 ♕xe3 36 ♕c7 is very good for White due to the threats of 37 ♖g4 and 37 ♖f7.

* * * *

33 ♔g1

1 point.

33 ... a4

* * * *

34 ♕c5

2 points. The queen is ideally placed on c5, where it attacks the bishop and the d5-pawn, and keeps an eye on the a-pawn. 1 point for 34 ♕d6 or 34 ♕b4.

34 ... ♕g6

* * * *

35 f3

1 point. A further inaccuracy by White. 35 e4! (3 points) is much stronger. The point is that Black cannot capture the pawn, due to 36 ♖d6.

35 ... ♕e6

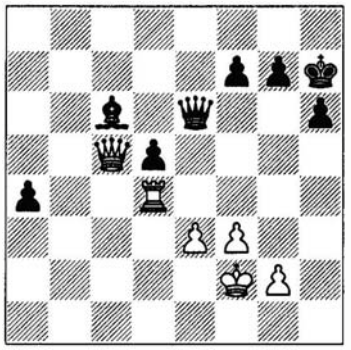
35...♕b1+ 36 ♔h2 ♕b8+ is a better defence, and maintains equal chances.

* * * *

36 ♔f2 *(D)*

3 points. The e4 idea is less attractive here: 36 e4 a3! and then Black can answer 37 exd5 with 37...♗xd5!, as 38 ♖xd5 ♕e1+ 39 ♔h2 ♕h4+ is a perpetual.

B



36 ... ♕f6

* * * *

37 ♕a7

1 point. Even stronger is 37 ♖b4! (3 points), and if 37...a3, then simply 38 ♖d4! wins the pawn.

37 ... ♕e6

* * * *

38 ♕a6

2 points. Also 2 points for 38 ♕b8 or repeating the position by 38 ♕c5.

38 ... ♗e8

* * * *

39 ♕d3+

2 points. So, White's manoeuvre has actually paid off but 38...♕f6 would have been a tougher defence.

39 ... ♕g6

* * * *

40 ♖xd5

1 point.

40 ... ♕xd3

* * * *

41 ♖xd3

1 point.

41 ... ♗b5

* * * *

42 ♖d5

2 points. 42 ♖c3 and 42 ♖d8 (both 2 points) are also worth considering.

42 ... ♗c4

* * * *

43 ♖a5

2 points. The main idea is of course to get behind the a-pawn.

43 ... ♗b3

* * * *

44 e4

2 points. 44 g4 (1 point) is another option but then it would be very difficult for White to make progress after 44...g5.

44 ... g6

* * * *

45 f4

2 points.

45 ... h5

* * * *

46 ♔g3

3 points. An excellent idea.

46 ... ♗c2

* * * *

47 e5

1 point.

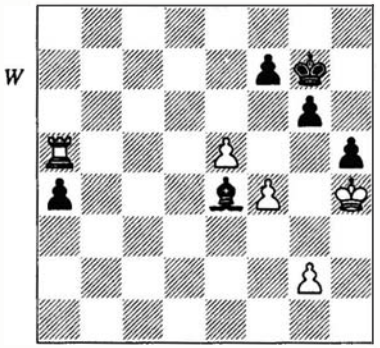
47 ... ♔g7

* * * *

48 ♔h4

2 points.

48 ... ♗e4 *(D)*



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49 g3

1 point.

49 ... ♔h6

If 49...♗c2, then 50 ♔g5 ♗d1 51 ♖a7 ♗b3 52 f5 gxf5 53 ♔xh5 wins.

* * * *

50 ♖xa4

1 point.

50 ... ♗f5

* * * *

51 ♖a7

2 points.

51 ... ♗e6

* * * *

52 ♖c7

2 points. Also 2 points for 52 ♖e7.

52 ... ♗b3

* * * *

53 f5

3 points. This is the only way to make progress.

53 ... gxf5

53...g5+ 54 ♔h3 is also winning for White. Black can only move his bishop back and forth, as ...♔g7 is always met by e6, so White starts with g4. Then in reply to ...h4, the king walks to d4, and the bishop soon ends up lacking space.

* * * *

54 ♖c8

1 point.

54 ... ♗e6

* * * *

55 ♖d8

2 points. 55 ♖e8 and 55 ♖b8 are equally good – 2 points for either.

55 ... ♔g6

* * * *

56 ♖g8+

2 points.

56 ... ♔h7

* * * *

57 ♖g5

1 point.

57 ... ♔h6

* * * *

58 ♖xh5+

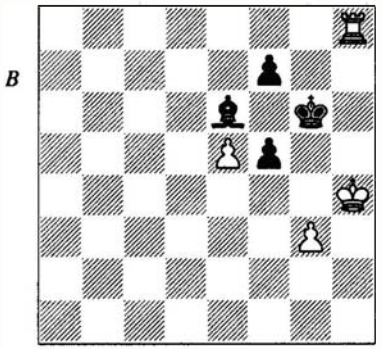
1 point. Add 2 points if you had intended to win this pawn immediately with 55 ♖h8+ ♔g7 56 ♖xh5.

58 ... ♔g6

* * * *

59 ♖h8 *(D)*

2 points.



59 ... ♔g7

59...f6 60 exf6 ♔xf6 61 ♖h6+ ♔e5 62 ♔g5 is also a win for White.

* * * *

60 ♖e8

2 points. The simplest.

60 ... ♔g6

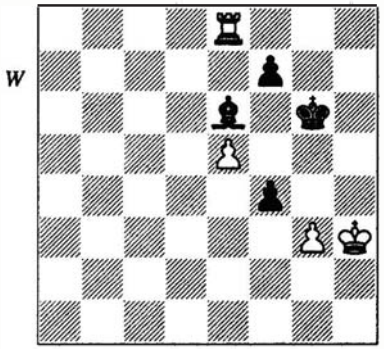
* * * *

61 ♔h3

2 points. White has to get his king around to f4.

61 ... ♗d5

How would you continue in the event of 61...f4+ (D)?



62 g4! (3 points) is correct (but not 62 ♖xe6+? fxe6 63 gxf4 ♔h7! with a theoretical draw). Then 62...♗d7 (or 62...f3 63 ♖xe6+ fxe6 64 ♔g3 +–) 63 ♖g8+ ♔h6 64 ♖d8 ♗e6 65 ♔h4, with the idea of ♖d4, is a simple win.

* * * *

62 ♖g8+

2 points.

1-0

After 62...♔h5, White plays ♔h2-g1-f2-e3-f4, followed by ♖g5xf5.

Evaluation scheme

90-105	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
76-89	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
61-75	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
46-60	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
26-45	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-25	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 5

I couldn't resist the temptation to include one of my own games. I have always had a special feeling for this one, if only for the amusing endgame. At the time, I didn't even have an Elo rating but today it still ranks among my very best games.

You are Black, and we begin after White's 14th move.

Jasnikowski – S. Pedersen
Assens 1990
King's Indian

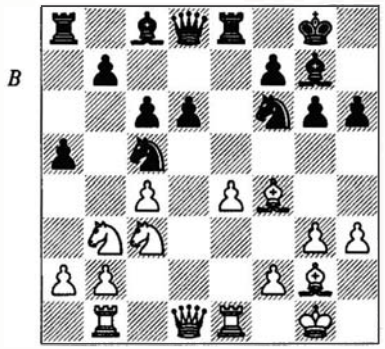
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 g3 0-0 5 ♗g2 d6 6 ♘c3 ♘bd7 7 0-0 e5 8 e4 ♖e8 9 h3 exd4 10 ♘xd4 ♘c5 11 ♖e1 a5 12 ♖b1 c6 13 ♗f4

It is worth making a few comments on the opening. This is the critical point for Black, where he has to decide upon a plan. The d6-pawn is often a big concern, and it has prompted moves such as 13...♗f8, which I don't like for the simple reason that it is very passive. 13...♘h5 is a more logical way of solving the problem. Then after 14 ♗e3, Black can play 14...♘f6 (inviting a draw by repetition), but White can simply defend his e4-pawn with 15 ♕c2. If Black is not interested in a draw he should play 14...♕c7 but his position remains slightly disadvantageous. 13...a4 is the move seen most frequently. Black prevents 14 ♘b3 and may be toying with ideas of playing ...a3 to provoke a further weakening of the h8-a1 diagonal. All the same I prefer White after 14 ♕d2.

13 ... h6

This move is primarily aimed at preventing White's most logical set-up, viz. 14 ♕d2, which would now drop a pawn in view of 14...g5.

14 ♘b3 *(D)*



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14 ... a4

2 points. 14...♘xb3 (2 points) is the main alternative and is safer, but 15 axb3 and 15 ♕xb3 both look slightly better for White. With the text-move, Black seeks a more complicated position where the doubled c-pawns (particularly the c5-pawn) could be weak, but if White fails to exert enough pressure, Black can also claim improved control of the centre.

15 ♘xc5

* * * *

15 ... dxc5

1 point.

16 ♕c2

As White has a space advantage in the centre and on the kingside, he understandably intends to keep the queens on the board, but 16 ♗d6! is a better way of doing it. If White could obtain a set-up with pawns on e5 and f4, he could certainly count on an advantage. The e4-square could then be utilized as a springboard for either a knight or a bishop. Black would then have a difficult choice between 16...a3, 16...♕a5 and 16...♗e6.

* * * *

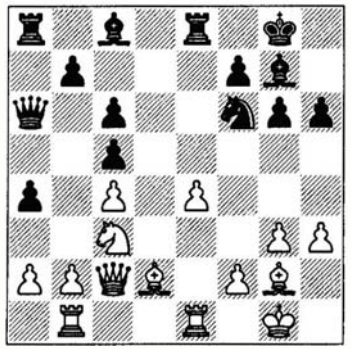
16 ... ♕a5

2 points.

17 ♗d2

* * * *

17 ... ♕a6 *(D)*



2 points. This is an excellent square for the queen. It steps away from possible threats and simultaneously attacks the c4-pawn. Take another 2 points if this was part of your plan when you played 16...♕a5.

18 b3

* * * *

18 ... axb3

1 point.

19 axb3

* * * *

19 ... ♗e6

2 points. Black finishes his development. Black cannot step up the pressure against e4, so e6 is definitely the right square for the bishop. Take 1 bonus point if you have noticed that a possible e5 advance by White is always met by ...♗f5.

20 ♘a4

* * * *

20 ... ♘d7

2 points. 20...♕a7 and 20...♗f8 are both inferior ways of protecting the c5-pawn. Nor does 20...b6 come into consideration because it seriously weakens the c6-pawn.

21 ♗c3

2 bonus points if you had prepared to meet 21 f4 with 21...b5. Then after 22 cxb5 cxb5 23 ♘xc5 (23 ♘c3 b4 24 ♘d5 ♗xd5 25 exd5 ♖ad8 looks roughly equal) 23...♖ec8 24 b4, Black regains his pawn with 24...♘xc5 25 bxc5 ♗d4+ but he can also play more aggressively with 24...♕a3.

* * * *

21 ... ♗xc3

2 points. 21...b5 is positionally undesirable at this stage due to 22 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 23 cxb5, which forces 23...♕xb5, since 23...cxb5? 24 ♘xc5 just leaves White a pawn up. Hence, it is hard to suggest decent alternatives. 21...♖ac8, to prepare ...b5, would be met by 22 ♖a1!, when Black's queen is far from ideally placed.

22 ♕xc3

* * * *

22 ... ♕a5

2 points. A queen exchange would definitely help Black, so this move is very natural. Another good idea is

22...♕a7 (2 points), which prepares ...b5 by protecting the c5-pawn.

23 ♕e3

* * * *

23 ... ♔h7

1 point. It is unclear whether the king is really better on h7 than on g7; hence 23...♔g7 also receives 1 point. 23...h5 is, however, a serious weakening of the kingside and should not be considered.

24 ♖ed1

* * * *

24 ... ♕b4

3 points. This move is a very important part of Black's plan. Indeed, White's last move was probably too slow and should have been substituted by 24 f4!, when White has reasonable attacking chances to outweigh the imminent disappearance of his entire queenside. This causes us to look further back, and question whether it is really necessary for Black to protect his h-pawn. It doesn't seem to be: after 23...♕b4! (instead of 23...♔h7), 24 ♕xh6 b5! 25 cxb5 cxb5 26 ♘b2 ♕xb3 looks very good for Black. You can add 4 points if this had been your intention.

25 f4

* * * *

25 ... b5

2 points. No question, Black needs to get on with it. Otherwise he'll be crushed on the kingside.

26 ♘b2

* * * *

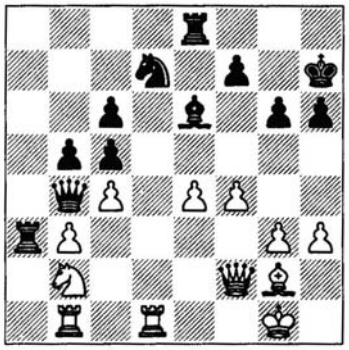
26 ... ♖a3

3 points. This looks too logical to be trashed but it does allow White to win a piece. On the other hand, moves like 26...f6 or 26...♖e7 just look too slow.

27 f5

What would be your reply to 27 ♕f2 (D)?

B



In fact, Black can do little to avoid the loss of a piece but he can collect many pawns along the way while keeping his position solid: 27...♖xb3! 28 f5 ♘e5! 29 fxe6 ♖xe6 (4 points if this was your idea). Actually, despite being down on material, Black's position looks very promising. The e5-knight is very strong, and Black can easily cover his f-pawn with ...♔g7 if required (in fact, this suggests that Black should have played ...♔g7 rather than ...♔h7 earlier on!), and Black will obtain some dangerous pawns on the queenside. Furthermore, the pin of the b2-knight is very irritating for White.

* * * *

27 ... ♖xb3

2 points. 27...♗xf5? is a serious error due to 28 ♕f2!, intending to meet 28...♗e6 with 29 ♖xd7! ♗xd7 30 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 31 ♖d1!, when White wins.

28 ♕f4

We already know the reply to 28 ♕f2.

* * * *

28 ... gxf5

2 points. This is the obvious continuation but it appears that the amazing 28...♖xb2 (1 point) might be just about feasible, but only a draw for Black at best. After 29 fxe6 ♘e5! (the point; White cannot take the knight) 30 exf7 ♖f8 31 ♖bc1 Black has two moves, of which only one looks sufficient for a draw:

a) 31...♖xg2+ 32 ♔xg2 ♕b2+ 33 ♕d2! (if the king retreats, Black just takes on f7 with good play, and 33 ♕f2 ♕xf2+ 34 ♔xf2 ♖xf7+ followed by 35...♘xc4 is also fine for Black) 33...♕xd2+ 34 ♖xd2 ♘xc4 35 e5! (35 ♖d7 ♔g7 36 ♖c7 ♖xf7 37 ♖xc6 ♘e5 38 ♖b6 ♘d3 39 ♖c3 ♖f2+ 40 ♔g1 ♖f3 41 ♖xb5 ♖xg3+ 42 ♔f1 ♖e3 43 ♖bb3 ♖e1+ 44 ♔g2 ♘f4+ 45 ♔f2 ♖xe4 should be a draw) 35...♖xf7 (alternatively, 35...♘xd2 36 e6 ♔g7 37 e7 ♔xf7 38 exf8♕+ ♔xf8 39 ♖xc5) 36 e6 ♖f8 37 ♖d7+ ♔g8 38 ♖c7 and here White has reasonable winning chances.

b) 31...♘xc4! 32 e5 ♖xg2+ 33 ♔xg2 ♕b2+ 34 ♔h1 ♘xe5 and Black should make a draw.

29 exf5

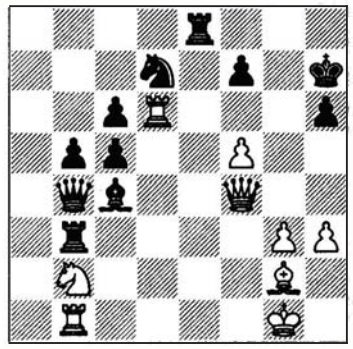
* * * *

29 ... ♗xc4

1 point.

30 ♖d6 *(D)*

B



During the game this came as a nasty surprise to me. Fortunately, in time-trouble, I managed to recover well.

* * * *

30 ... ♕c3

4 points. This seems to be more or less the only defensive plan. The queen can now come to the king's aid via g7.

31 ♕xh6+

* * * *

31 ... ♔g8

1 point – I'm feeling generous! In fact, the reverse order of moves, i.e. 30...♔g8 (instead of 30...♕c3), might have been more accurate. Then 31 ♕xh6 could even have been met by 31...♖xb2 or 31...♖xg3!?. Take 5 points if you chose 30...♔g8. However, there is nothing at all wrong with the move-order chosen.

32 ♕g5+

On 32 ♖xd7, 32...♕xg3 would have been very strong.

* * * *

32 ... ♕g7

2 points. Black should not play 32...♔f8. He might then be able to

survive 33 f6 ♘xf6!, while even 33 ♖xd7 ♗d5! 34 ♔h2! ♕c2! doesn't look very clear. However, White has at least a draw in the last line, and Black should really be looking for more at this point.

33 ♕xg7+

* * * *

33 ... ♔xg7

1 point.

34 ♖xd7

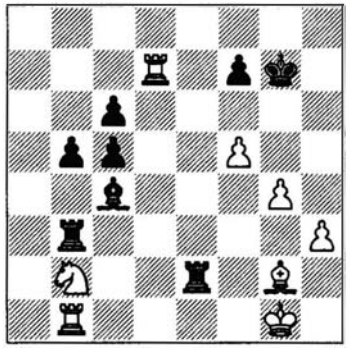
* * * *

34 ... ♖e2

2 points.

35 g4 *(D)*

B



* * * *

35 ... ♖g3

3 points. Black has far fewer winning chances after 35...♖bxb2 (1 point) 36 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 37 g5.

36 ♘xc4

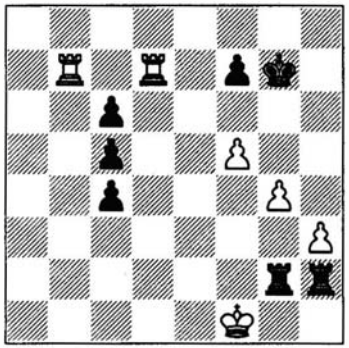
* * * *

36 ... ♖gxg2+

2 points. Black has managed to double rooks on the 7th rank. In this case it is a nice insurance of at least half a point. We will run smoothly over the next few moves and take up the action again with Black's 42nd move...

37 ♔h1 bxc4 38 ♖bb7 ♖h2+ 39 ♔g1 ♖hg2+ 40 ♔h1 ♖h2+ 41 ♔g1 ♖eg2+ 42 ♔f1 *(D)*

B



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42 ... ♔f6

3 points. Black's king is going to use the white pawns as a shield against checks from the white rooks. Black's last move wasn't really necessary, though, as Black can also deliver that check if required. 42...♔h6 (3 points) is equally good.

43 ♖xf7+

* * * *

43 ... ♔g5

1 point. 43...♔e5 (1 point) is also good.

44 f6

* * * *

44 ... ♔f4

2 points.

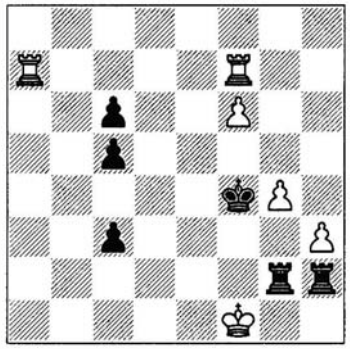
45 ♖a7

* * * *

45 ... c3 *(D)*

2 points. 45...♖c2 (2 points) is even more accurate. You can add the given points if you had intended some sort of rook move before playing ...♔f4, e.g. 44...♖c2 or 44...♖f2+.

W



46 ♖fd7

* * * *

46 ... c4

2 points.

47 ♖a3

* * * *

47 ... ♖c2

2 points. This is the simplest and would indeed have been on move 45 and 46 too. You can add up the given points if you had intended other winning plans. At this stage, for example, 47...♖d2 48 ♖xd2 cxd2 would also win.

48 ♔g1

* * * *

48 ... ♔g3

1 point. Again, Black can win in other ways, but with this Black forces mate in a maximum of 4 more moves.

0-1

Evaluation scheme

55-67	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
48-54	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
40-47	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
30-39	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-29	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 6

The following game is a typical Sicilian Najdorf with lots of complications. It is a game where Black takes great risks in his attempts to win and is rewarded in the end. We begin from the diagram after White's 11th move.

Isaev – A. Timoshenko
corr. 1989-91
Sicilian Najdorf

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 f4 ♘bd7 8 ♕f3 ♕c7 9 0-0-0 ♗e7 10 ♗d3 h6 11 ♗h4 *(D)*

B

* * * *

11 ... g5

2 points. This possibility is the main idea behind playing ...h6, though 11...♘c5 (2 points) is also playable. With 11...g5 Black sacrifices a pawn to obtain excellent control over the central e5-square. This is a very important positional idea in this line of the Najdorf.

11...b5 is a very natural move, which is not totally refuted, but White gets a promising attacking position with 12 e5! ♗b7 13 ♘xe6! fxe6 14 ♗g6+. The attack is worth a piece.

12 e5

12 fxg5 has been more popular in practice but the general consensus is that Black is doing fine in this particular version of the Browne System.

* * * *

12 ... gxh4

2 points. Rather ruthlessly I am not giving any points for 12...dxe5. This has been played very little and convincing analysis of it remains to be published but my feeling is that 13 ♘xe6 fxe6 14 ♗g6+ ♔d8 15 fxg5 is too dangerous for Black. A few lines to support this view:

a) 15...♘h7 16 ♕f7!? hxg5 17 ♗g3 ♘hf6 18 ♕xe6 ♕c6 19 ♕xe5 looks very good for White. He already has two pawns for the knight and Black's king has no prospects of escaping.

b) 15...♘e8 is probably a better chance and was tried in Sakharov-Gasanov, USSR 1980. White played 16 ♘e4 and the game was drawn in 23 moves. My first idea was 16 ♕g4 ♕c5 17 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 18 g6!, which looks quite dangerous for Black but when I looked up the game in *Informator*, I found that Kasparov and Sakharov gave 16 ♕h5 with the idea 16...♘g7? 17 ♕xh6!!, winning for White, while 16...♕c5 17 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 18 gxh6 gives White a pawn more compared to my first intention. However, Black might have 16...♕c4!?, when it is rather unclear what happens after 17 g3!?, but it

certainly makes a point for my 16 ♕g4 idea. All in all, I would rather not be Black.

13 exf6

* * * *

13 ... ♘xf6

1 point. Also 1 point for the equally playable but far less popular recapture 13...♗xf6!?. There is something to be said for and against both moves. The text-move is the more aesthetically pleasing, but is also a little slow, while 13...♗xf6 gains a tempo, because White has to respond to the attack on the d4-knight, and the d7-knight can later come to c5.

14 f5

It is clear that Black has the better long-term prospects. Not only is he a pawn up but he also has the bishop-pair and a central pawn majority. White must go for quick activity.

* * * *

14 ... e5

1 point. Black cannot really allow White to capture on e6 and hence keeps the position closed.

15 ♘de2

* * * *

15 ... ♗d7

1 point; there is also 1 bonus point if this was one your ideas in playing 13...♘xf6.

16 ♗e4

* * * *

16 ... ♗c6 *(D)*

2 points. In fact, Black has many sensible options at this point:

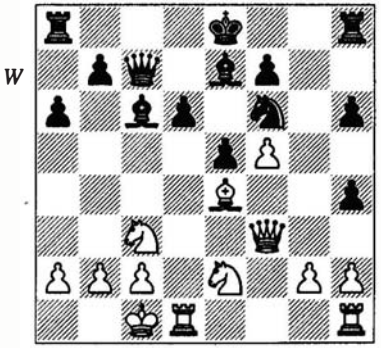
a) 16...♘xe4 (2 points) 17 ♘xe4 ♗c6 18 ♘2c3 ♖c8 19 ♕e2 ♖g8 20 ♖he1 ♗xe4 21 ♕xe4 ♕c6 gave Black an edge in Grabarczyk-Kempinski, Polanica Zdroj 1999.

b) 16...♖c8!? (2 points) is another interesting idea, suggesting that Black benefits from the exchanges following 17 ♗xb7 ♗c6 18 ♗xc6+ ♕xc6 19 ♕xc6+ ♖xc6, when the position is roughly equal.

c) 16...♖g8 (1 point) has similar intentions but here White should probably avoid taking on b7 and instead continue 17 ♘d5.

d) It is worth pointing out that 16...0-0-0 looks dubious in view of 17 ♘d5 ♘xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗g5+ 19 ♔b1 ♗c6 20 ♘c3, as played in Stean-Szmetan, Haifa OL 1976. White has a clear advantage due to his much better knight versus the dark-squared bishop – a common Sicilian theme.

W



17 ♘d5

* * * *

17 ... ♗xd5

2 points.

18 ♗xd5

* * * *

18 ... ♖c8

3 points. As is so often the case in these Sicilians, Black should play actively. Quite often the king is not unsafe in the centre, and sometimes Black even keeps this as an asset in the endgame. 18...0-0 looks a bit risky but might be feasible and so deserves 1 point. Attempting to castle queenside with, for example, 18...♘xd5 (1 point) 19 ♖xd5 ♗g5+ 20 ♔b1 0-0-0, is also possible, although White then retains an advantage with 21 ♕e4!. Also 1 point if you chose to play this in the order 17...♘xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♗xd5, but it makes sense to keep the knight on f6 to blockade the f-pawn.

19 ♘c3

* * * *

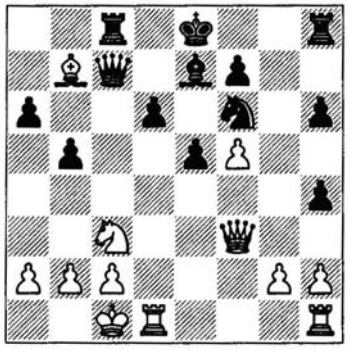
19 ... b5

2 points. This is in the spirit of the previous move. Again 19...♘xd5 (1 point) is possible.

20 ♗b3

What would you have played in the event of 20 ♗b7 (D)?

B



20...♖b8 21 ♗xa6 ♕c5 is one idea but 22 ♗xb5+! is good for White, so no reward for this. 20...e4 (2 points) is a better try. The position arising after 21 ♗xe4 b4 22 ♘d5 ♘xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♗f6 is roughly equal. However, 3 points for the promising exchange sacrifice 20...0-0!. After 21 ♗xc8 ♖xc8 22 ♕e2, Black plays 22...♕c6 and threatens 23...b4. White should reply 23 ♖he1 but 23...b4 24 ♘e4 d5 25 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 seems to give Black good compensation, at least.

* * * *

20 ... ♕c6

2 points. Black keeps fighting for the central d5- and e4-squares, and of course wouldn't mind exchanges.

21 ♕e2

* * * *

21 ... ♖g8

2 points.

22 ♘d5

* * * *

22 ... a5

3 points. Having given up the right to castle it is absolutely essential to keep up the pressure. With the text-move, Black aims to provoke a weakness in the white king position.

23 ♘xf6+

2 bonus points if you had considered 23 ♖d3 and were ready to meet this simply with 23...b4!.

* * * *

23 ... ♗xf6

1 point.

24 ♗d5

* * * *

24 ... ♕b6

2 points. 24...♕c5 is possible but less accurate, as White can then move his bishop away from d5, by which he

threatens ♖d5. In that case Black has to move the queen from c5 anyway.

25 ♖d3

* * * *

25 ... ♖g5

2 points. This is a good move, which prevents a possible ♕h5, but perhaps is not entirely necessary. 25...♔e7 (2 points) is equally good.

26 ♔b1

* * * *

26 ... ♔f8

2 points. Black finally thinks about king safety but it is not strictly required. Also 2 points if you intended ...♔f8 on your last move, and 2 points as well for 25...b4 or 26...b4.

27 c3

* * * *

27 ... b4

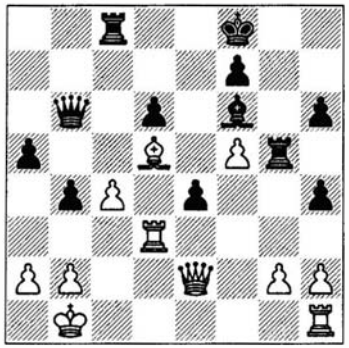
2 points.

28 c4

* * * *

28 ... e4 *(D)*

W



4 points. An excellent idea: Black gives the pawn back in order to open the h8-a1 diagonal.

29 ♗xe4

* * * *

29 ... ♖e8

3 points. 29...♖xc4 (1 point) is also possible as 30 ♖hd1 can be met by 30...♖d4 but we are not looking for exchanges!

30 ♖d5

Black was threatening ...♖xf5.

* * * *

30 ... h3

4 points. My first reaction was to ask if this is really necessary. Apart from setting a little trap, it is not clear how this improves Black's position. But as we shall see, it is much cleverer than it appears at this stage.

31 g3

2 bonus points if you had seen that White couldn't play 31 gxh3 on account of 31...♖g1+ 32 ♖xg1 ♕xg1+ 33 ♔c2 (33 ♖d1 ♖xe4 −+) 33...♕a1 with a winning attack for Black.

* * * *

31 ... b3

2 points. Also 2 points if you wanted to play this on the previous move but the inclusion of 30...h3 31 g3 makes Black's attack a lot more dangerous. Moreover, this time White has to accept the sacrifice.

32 axb3

2 bonus points for seeing 32 a3? ♖xe4! 33 ♕xe4 ♕f2, when White cannot protect the b2-pawn.

* * * *

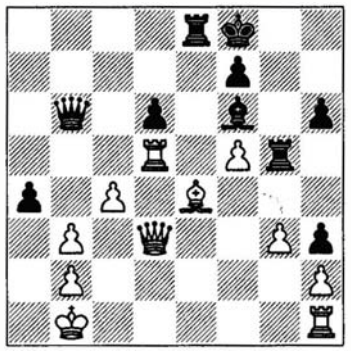
32 ... a4

3 points. 32...♕xb3 (1 point) is much less clear in view of 33 ♖b5 ♕a4 34 ♕c2, when White defends.

33 b4

With this move White refuses to have the a- or b-file opened immediately, and hence it seems a fairly sensible choice. However, White can also consider counter-attacking with 33 ♕d3!? *(D)*.

B



This produces an incredibly complex position as then Black must also think about how to respond to the threat of 34 ♖xd6. Of course, Black can remove that worry by playing 33...♗e5, but then the bishop severely restricts Black's own possibilities by interfering with the rook on e8. White stands well after 34 ♖b5. From the diagram Black has three interesting options at his disposal but he achieves a draw at most:

a) 33...axb3 34 ♖xd6 ♕a7! 35 ♖xf6 ♕a2+ 36 ♔c1 ♕a1+ 37 ♕b1 ♕a7! is probably a draw. White can repeat the position with 38 ♕d3 but other moves look too risky.

b) 33...♕f2 34 ♕c2 ♕e3 is interesting. After 35 ♗d3, Black has a choice between 35...axb3 36 ♕xb3 ♕f3, which doesn't look very convincing, and 35...♖b8 36 ♖b5 ♖xb5 37 cxb5 axb3 38 ♕xb3 ♖xf5, which seems to be a draw after 39 b6 ♖f2 40 b7 ♖xb2+ 41 ♕xb2 ♕xd3+ 42 ♔a2 ♕c4+ 43 ♕b3 ♕e2+ 44 ♔b1 (not 44 ♔a3? ♕a6+ 45 ♕a4 ♗b2+ 46 ♔xb2 ♕xb7+ followed by 47...♕xh1 –+) 44...♕e4+ 45 ♔a2 ♕e2+ =.

c) 33...♖g4 34 ♖xd6 ♕a7! is Black's best try for more than a draw but after 35 ♖xf6 ♖gxe4 36 ♖d1! White is soon building up threats of his own. Therefore Black must be quick. A few attempts:

c1) 36...axb3 37 ♕xb3 ♖b8 38 ♕d3 ♖e3 39 ♕d6+ ♔g8 40 ♖xh6 and now Black's best is to force a draw with 40...♖xb2+ 41 ♔xb2 ♕b7+ 42 ♕b6 ♕g2+ 43 ♔b1 ♕e4+ 44 ♔a1 ♕a8+ 45 ♔b1 ♕e4+, etc. White cannot escape checks on g2, e4 and a8.

c2) 36...♖e1 37 ♖xh6 (best; 37 ♖d6 ♖xd1+ 38 ♕xd1 axb3 is dangerous for White since 39 ♕xb3 loses the h-pawn after 39...♕g1+ 40 ♖d1 ♕xh2, whereafter Black has the better prospects) 37...♕g1 38 ♕d6+ ♔g8 39 ♖g6+ with a draw.

* * * *

33 ... a3

4 points. Another surprising pawn-thrust. Doesn't this just help White support the b-pawn if he captures the pawn? Well, yes, but the h8-a1 diagonal is opened, though it is not immediately clear how this can be exploited.

34 bxa3

* * * *

34 ... ♖g4 *(D)*

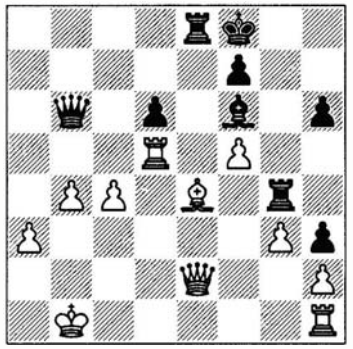
3 points. Add 2 bonus points if you had planned this on your last move.

Actually, this idea was also tempting on Black's last move but 33...♖g4 (instead of 33...a3!) is less clear due to 34 ♕xg4 ♕xb4 35 ♕e2 ♖xe4 36 ♕d2 ♖xc4 37 ♕xh6+ ♔e7 38 ♕d2, when I don't see anything clear-cut for Black.

Another try is 33...h5 (2 points), intending the ...♖g4 idea without actually sacrificing a rook. White should then respond with 34 ♕c2 or 34 ♕d3. The latter could lead to a rather unclear rook ending after 34...♖g4 35 ♖xd6 ♕xb4 36 ♖xf6 ♖gxe4 37 ♕d6+ ♕xd6 38 ♖xd6 ♖xc4.

Returning to the actual game, 34...♕a7 (1 point) was an alternative, threatening the a3-pawn and possibly 35...♕e7.

W



35 ♕xg4

* * * *

35 ... ♕f2

2 points.

36 ♗c2

* * * *

36 ... ♖e3

4 points. This is the only move that justifies Black's rook sacrifice. Take 3 bonus points if you had seen this idea when playing 34...♖g4!!. In an over-the-board situation (or indeed, a correspondence game) it would be imperative to have such a move planned when executing the 34th move. There are a couple of other tries, which both require vigilant play from White:

a) 36...♕e3? is best met not by 37 ♖xd6? ♕xa3 38 ♖xf6 ♕xb4+ 39 ♔c1 ♕a3+ 40 ♔d1 ♕a1+ 41 ♔d2 ♕a5+ 42 ♔c1 ♕a3+ 43 ♔d1 ♕a1+ 44 ♔d2 ♕a5+, which is no more than a draw for White. With a substantial amount of material in the bag, White can afford to play 37 ♖d3! ♕e5 38 ♕d4!, with a winning position.

b) 36...♖e1+ (2 points) is the best alternative. Then 37 ♖xe1? ♕xe1+ allows Black to escape with a draw after 38 ♖d1 ♕c3 39 ♔c1 ♗g5+ 40 ♔b1 ♗f6 41 ♔c1, etc., while Black would even take the full point in the event of the careless 38 ♔a2?? ♕c3. However, 37 ♖d1 ♖xh1 38 ♖xh1 ♕e3 39 ♕f4! (39 ♕xh3? is at least a draw for Black: 39...♔e7! 40 ♕g2! ♕xa3 41 ♕e2+ ♔d8 42 ♗d1 ♕a1+ 43 ♔c2 ♕c3+ 44 ♔b1 ♕a1+, etc.) 39...♕c3 40 ♕xh6+ ♔e7 41 ♔c1 ♕xa3+ 42 ♔d2 ♕c3+ 43 ♔e2 ♕xc2+ 44 ♕d2 ♕xc4+ 45 ♕d3 ♕a2+ 46 ♔e1 leaves White an exchange up, even though it will be very hard to exploit this after 46...♗e5!?.

37 ♖a5

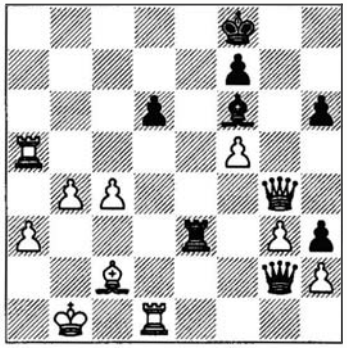
* * * *

37 ... ♕g2

4 points.

38 ♖d1 *(D)*

* * * *



38 ... ♖b3+

2 points. Accuracy is needed until the end. The immediate 37...♖b3+ (instead of 37...♕g2!) would have thrown away the win. After 38 ♔c1, Black has nothing better than 38...♕e3+ 39 ♔d1 ♖d3+ 40 ♗xd3 ♕xd3+ 41 ♔e1 ♗c3+ 42 ♔f2 ♗d4+ with a draw by perpetual check after 43 ♔e1 ♗c3+.

White could have defended better, though, and if we go back a few moves we have 37 ♕f4!, which gives Black no time to play ...♕g2, as in the game. Black must content himself with a drawn endgame after 37...♖xa3! 38 ♖a5 ♖b3+ 39 ♔c1 ♗g5 40 ♕xg5 hxg5 41 ♗xb3 ♕f3 42 ♖d1 ♕xb3.

39 ♔c1

* * * *

39 ... ♗b2+

2 points.

40 ♔b1

* * * *

40 ... ♗d4+

2 points. White is mated in two more moves.

0-1

Evaluation scheme

70-84	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
56-69	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
41-55	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
26-40	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
16-25	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-15	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 7

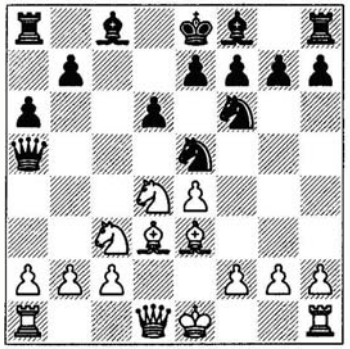
When launching an attack, intuition often counts above all. If you don't feel it is right, then you can be sure that it is not going to work.

In this game, Kramnik, as Black gets an unexpected chance to turn in an amazing attack.

You are Black, and we begin after White's 10th move:

Topalov – Kramnik
Belgrade 1995
Sicilian, Sozin Attack

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 d6 6 ♗c4 ♕b6 7 ♘db5 a6 8 ♗e3 ♕a5 9 ♘d4 ♘e5 10 ♗d3 *(D)*



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10 ... ♘eg4

2 points. At the time this was a new move. Other sensible ideas are 10...g6, 10...e6 and 10...♘fg4!?. Also 2 points if you chose any of those moves. 10...♘xd3+ gets 1 point. This is not a bad move but there is no point in exchanging on d3 before White attacks the knight.

11 ♗c1

* * * *

11 ... g6

2 points. 11...♕b6 is also feasible but since it does not really threaten anything, White simply castles. 11...e6 (1 point) would be another set-up but then I believe Black could just as well have played it on the previous move and kept White guessing about which knight will go to g4.

The more radical 11...d5!? (2 points) looks very interesting too. This is not just because it contains a little trap in 12 0-0 dxe4 13 ♘xe4? ♘xe4 14 ♗xe4 ♕e5, with a double-attack on the bishop and the h2-pawn, but more pertinently because Black has generally solved his problems in such position if he can implement this thrust. White's best appears to be 12 ♘b3 (12 exd5 ♘xd5 is not a problem for Black) 12...♕b6 13 ♕e2! dxe4 14 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♗xe4, when White's lead in development might promise him a little something.

12 ♘b3

* * * *

12 ... ♕b6

2 points. This is much better than 12...♕c7?! 13 f4!, when a subsequent h3 will drive Black's knight back to h6.

13 ♕e2

* * * *

13 ... ♗g7

2 points. 13...♘e5 (1 point) is inconsistent, though natural if one fears White's idea of playing f4 and h3 to

kick the knight back. White obtains a small advantage after 14 ♗e3 ♕d8 15 f4 ♘xd3+ 16 cxd3 ♗g7 17 0-0.

14 f4

* * * *

14 ... ♘h5 *(D)*

3 points. White would be much better if he got time for h3 as the knight would then become offside if it had to retreat to h6. The attempt to play ...♘h5 only in reply to h3 fails, because after, for example, 14...♗e6 15 h3 ♘h5 White plays 16 ♕f3! with a very large advantage.

W

15 ♘d5

* * * *

15 ... ♕d8

1 point.

16 ♗d2

* * * *

16 ... e6

3 points. Deduct 5 points if you missed White's threat of 17 ♗a5. 16...b6 (1 point) parries the threat but also weakens the queenside substantially. After 17 0-0-0 White has a large advantage.

17 ♗a5

* * * *

17 ... ♕h4+

1 point.

18 g3

* * * *

18 ... ♘xg3

1 point.

19 ♘c7+

19 hxg3!? ♕xg3+ 20 ♔d2 exd5 21 ♖af1! (21 exd5+ is less accurate, because Black can then play 21...♔d7! 22 ♖af1 ♖e8 ∓) is an interesting idea, intending to trap Black's queen with ♖f3. Black is forced to reply 21...♘f6 22 exd5+ ♔f8, when White definitely has play for the pawn.

* * * *

19 ... ♔e7

1 point.

20 hxg3

* * * *

20 ... ♕xg3+

2 points. Black would not have adequate compensation after 20...♕xh1+ 21 ♔d2 ♕h3 22 ♘xa8 ♕xg3 23 ♖f1.

21 ♔d1

* * * *

21 ... ♘f2+

2 points. The last 5 moves or so have been more or less forced. Black has to follow up energetically to demonstrate enough compensation for the sacrificed material and therefore there is no time to think about saving the rook on a8 first.

22 ♔d2

* * * *

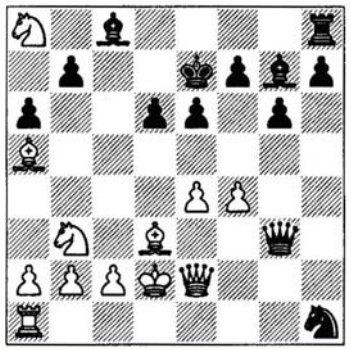
22 ... ♘xh1

1 point.

23 ♘xa8 *(D)*

This may be too greedy and it is possible that White should simply play 23 ♖xh1. Black then has a choice between 23...♕xf4+ 24 ♔d1 ♖b8, which allows White to force a repetition with 25 ♗d2 ♕g3 26 ♗e1 ♕f4 27 ♗d2, or 23...♖b8, which, on the other hand, might be risky. White can try either 24 ♖f1 or 24 ♕f1.

B



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23 ... ♕xf4+

2 points. Another option is to bring back the knight with 23...♘f2 (1 point).

24 ♕e3

* * * *

24 ... ♕h2+

2 points. 24...♗h6!? (1 point) 25 ♕xf4 ♗xf4+ 26 ♔e2 ♘g3+ 27 ♔f3 ♘h5, with an edge for Black, is another possibility.

25 ♕e2

* * * *

25 ... ♕f4+

1 point.

26 ♕e3 ♕h2+

27 ♕e2

* * * *

27 ... ♗h6+

3 points. Add 1 more point if you wanted to play ...♗h6+ on move 25. However, adding two moves with a repetition such as ...♕h2-f4-h2 is often a good practical decision.

28 ♔c3

* * * *

28 ... ♕e5+

2 points. Also 2 points for 28...♗g7+ or 28...♕xe2 29 ♗xe2 ♘g3.

29 ♔b4

* * * *

29 ... ♘g3

1 point.

30 ♕e1

* * * *

30 ... ♗g7

3 points. 30...♕xb2 (1 point) allows White a little breathing room with 31 ♖b1 ♕e5 32 ♘b6.

31 ♘b6

This is probably a mistake. The most tenacious defence is 31 ♖b1!. The point is that 31...♗d7 is met by 32 ♔a3!, which threatens 33 ♗c3. The position is then very messy. The endgame after 32...♘xe4 33 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 34 ♗xe4 ♖xa8 35 ♗xb7 ♖a7 36 ♗f3 d5 is hard to assess but could be good for White. However, I have been somewhat seduced by the idea 32...♖xa8 33 ♗c3 ♕b5!? (there are other moves but this is fun) 34 ♗xb5 axb5+ 35 ♘a5 (35 ♗a5 is met by 35...♘h5!? followed by ...b6, or ...♖a6 and ...b6 if required) 35...♗xc3 36 bxc3 (or 36 ♕xc3 ♘xe4 37 ♕e1 ♘f6 and Black will win the knight on a5, due to the threat of ...b6) 36...♖xa5+ 37 ♔b2 ♘h5 with an unclear position. This is

all lots of fun but totally unclear. I think, objectively, Black should simply get his pawns moving with 31...f5!. Then, for example, 32 exf5 ♕xe1+ 33 ♖xe1 gxf5 34 ♘b6 h5 looks very good for Black.

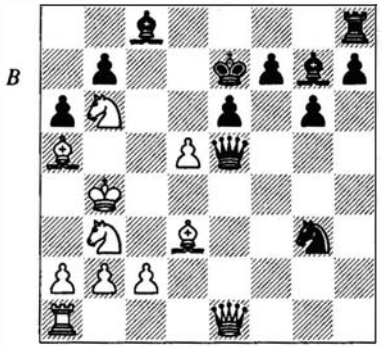
* * * *

31 ... d5

4 points. Of course, with White's king so exposed Black should aim to open the position. 31...f5 (1 point) has totally different ambitions, as Black then aims for a slightly better ending after 32 exf5 ♕xe1+ 33 ♖xe1 ♘xf5.

32 ♔a4

What would you have played after 32 exd5 (D)?



32...♕d6+ 33 ♔c4 (33 ♔a4 ♗d7+! 34 ♘xd7 b5+ 35 ♗xb5 axb5+ 36 ♔xb5 ♕xd7+ and 33 ♘c5 ♗d4 both lose instantly for White) 33...♕f4+ 34 ♔c5 ♗d7!, with the sneaky idea of 35...♕d6+ 36 ♔c4 ♗b5#, is very strong. 5 points if you saw this far. White can then try:

a) 35 ♘c4 ♖c8+ 36 ♔b4 b5 37 ♗c7 ♖xc7 38 d6+ ♔f8 39 dxc7 bxc4 40 c8♕+ (40 ♗xc4 ♕d6+ 41 ♔a5 ♕xc7+ −+) 40...♗xc8 41 ♗xc4 ♕d6+ 42 ♔a5 ♕c7+ 43 ♔b4 ♕b6+ 44 ♔a3 ♕d6+ 45 ♕b4 (45 ♔a4 ♗d7+ 46 ♔a5 ♗f6 −+) 45...♗xb2+ −+.

b) 35 a4 is therefore the only way to parry the threat, but to no avail. Burgess gives 35...♗e5! in *The Mammoth Book of the World's Greatest Chess Games*, and continues 36 ♘xd7 (36 ♘c4 ♖c8+ 37 ♔b4 b5 also wins for Black) 36...♔xd7 with a win for Black. For example, after 37 ♔b6 (37 dxe6+ fxe6 only postpones things) 37...♗d4+ 38 ♘c5+ ♗xc5 39 ♔xc5 ♖c8+, White is being mated.

* * * *

32 ... ♗d7+

3 points.

33 ♘xd7

* * * *

33 ... b5+

2 points.

34 ♔b4

* * * *

34 ... ♔xd7

1 point.

35 ♗b6

* * * *

35 ... ♕xb2

1 point. This is actually slightly inaccurate. 35...dxe4 (2 points) is good, but the best continuation is 35...♘xe4! (3 points). Then after 36 ♗xe4 Black plays 36...♕xb2!! (2 bonus points if this was your idea) with a winning attack:

a) 37 ♖b1 ♖c8! 38 ♗c5 ♗c3+! 39 ♕xc3 a5+, winning.

b) 37 ♗xd5 exd5 38 ♖b1 ♖c8! and Black wins.

c) 37 c4 bxc4! (this is the simplest even though there are probably other wins too) 38 ♖b1 ♗f8+ 39 ♗c5 ♗xc5+ 40 ♔xc5 ♖c8+ 41 ♔b6 ♕a3, and wins.

Actually, the ...♘xe4 idea could also have been played earlier in the game. Take 2 points if you had intended 32...♘xe4!?. White's best is then 33 ♗xe4 (33 ♕b4+ ♘d6 is good for Black), but Black is clearly on top after 33...♗d7+! 34 ♘xd7 b5+ 35 ♔b4 ♔xd7 36 ♘c5+ ♔c6 37 c3 ♗f8 38 ♗d3 ♗xc5+ 39 ♔b3 ♕xe1 40 ♖xe1 g5. Black has four healthy pawns for the piece and White's bishop on a5 is completely out of play.

36 exd5

36 ♗xb5+!? axb5 37 ♕xg3 ♖c8 38 ♖f1! wouldn't change the result, but it does demand great accuracy from Black. For instance, 38...♔e8?! 39 ♕f3! f5 40 exf5 ♕xa2 41 ♔xb5 ♖c3 (41...♕a8 42 ♘a5 parries the ...♕c6+ threat) 42 ♕f2 ♖xc2 43 ♕e3 ♖e2 44 ♕h3 ♖b2 45 ♖f3 gives White counterplay. However, 38...f5! 39 exd5 ♕xc2 40 dxe6+ ♔e8! wins for Black. Burgess gives 41 ♖c1 ♗f8+ 42 e7 ♗xe7+ 43 ♗c5 ♕e4+! 44 ♔xb5 ♕c6+ 45 ♔b4 ♕b6+, when Black regains the piece, keeping two extra pawns.

* * * *

36 ... ♖c8

2 points. 36...♗f8+ 37 ♗c5 ♗xc5+ 38 ♔xc5 ♖c8+ 39 ♔b6 is tempting but not very convincing, and 36...exd5 37 ♗xb5+! gives White an improved version of the note to White's 36th move.

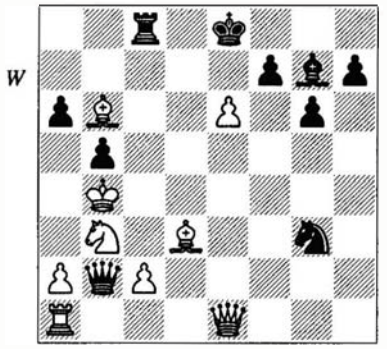
37 dxe6+

* * * *

37 ... ♔e8 *(D)*

5 points. Without doubt the most difficult move of the game. The natural 37...fxe6 is wrong due to 38 ♗xb5+! ♔e7 (38...axb5 39 ♖d1+ ♔e7 40 ♕xg3 and suddenly it is Black who is under attack) 39 ♗c5+! ♖xc5 40 ♔xc5 ♕a3+ (40...♕xc2+ 41 ♔b6 axb5 42 ♖c1 ♕d3 43 ♖c6 is very good for White) 41 ♔b6 axb5 42 ♖d1 with a dangerous attack for White.

37...♔c6 (2 points) is better but White seems to force a draw with 38 ♗xb5+! axb5 39 ♗c5 ♘e2! 40 ♕h1+ ♔c7 41 ♕d5! ♕c3+ 42 ♔a3 ♕b2+ 43 ♔b4 ♕c3+.



38 ♗c5

White's best chance was 38 ♗xb5+! axb5 39 exf7++ ♔xf7 40 ♕xg3, when 40...♕c3+! 41 ♕xc3 ♗xc3+ 42 ♔xb5 ♗xa1 43 ♘xa1 h5 leads to a complex ending that favours Black. Kramnik gives 44 ♘b3 as White's best, after which 44...h4! 45 ♘d4 g5!? 46 ♘f3 ♔g6 is a little better for Black.

* * * *

38 ... ♗c3+

2 points.

39 ♕xc3

* * * *

39 ... a5+

1 point.

40 ♔xb5

* * * *

40 ... ♕xc3

1 point.

0-1

Evaluation scheme

55-68	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
48-54	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
40-47	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
30-39	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-29	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
–5-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

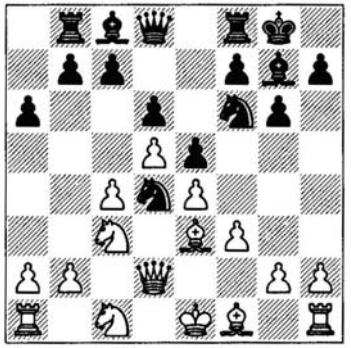
Game 8

Ex-World Champion Anatoly Karpov is a renowned positional player with a superb flair for thinking prophylactically. This game is full of small nuances designed to prevent Black's counterplay.

You are to play White, and we take up the action after Black's 10th move.

Karpov – Cu. Hansen
Groningen 1995
King's Indian

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 ♘c6 7 ♘ge2 a6 8 ♕d2 ♖b8 9 ♘c1 e5 10 d5 ♘d4 *(D)*



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11 ♘1e2

2 points. Black's plan is to support his d4-knight with ...c5, so White should immediately challenge the d4-knight. White should definitely avoid 11 ♗xd4, even though this does cut across Black's ...c5 idea, since the dark squares will become too vulnerable. After 11...exd4, 12 ♕xd4? is not an option in view of 12...♘xe4, so the knight must retreat, after which it is generally agreed that Black's lead in development and superiority on the dark squares give him an advantage, even at the possible cost of a pawn.

The most logical alternative to the text-move is 11 ♘b3 (2 points) but here, apart from sacrificing a pawn with 11...c5 12 dxc6 bxc6!? (transposing to a line given in the next note), Black has a safe reply in 11...♘xb3 12 axb3 c5.

11 ... ♘xe2

This is Black's most solid option. A more complicated position arises after 11...c5!? 12 dxc6. Black can then try 12...bxc6 13 ♘xd4 exd4 14 ♗xd4, when several factors provide compensation for the pawn. With White's knight on e2, 12...♘xc6 is another idea. This looks very anti-positional but Black hopes to generate activity by ...♗e6 and ...b5. Note that this is only a serious option because White's knight is less well placed on e2 than on b3. Hence, Karpov's choice of 11 ♘1e2 rather than 11 ♘b3 should probably be understood in the context of Black playing 11...♘xb3 followed by 12...c5 in the case of White playing 11 ♘b3.

* * * *

12 ♗xe2

1 point. Other moves don't really help White's development and therefore don't make much sense.

12 ... ♘h5

* * * *

13 0-0-0

3 points. 13 g4 is a rather dubious idea: after 13...♘f4 14 ♗xf4 exf4 15 ♕xf4 White has won a pawn but is terribly weak on the dark squares. Another option is 13 0-0 but in this type of position the king is safer on the queenside, even though Black seems to be lined up for an attack, having already made the preparatory moves ...♖b8 and ...a6.

13 ... f5

* * * *

14 ♔b1

2 points. A typically 'lazy' move but also very 'Karpovian'. Karpov is the kind of player who likes to be solid and flexible, and hence does not yet want to reveal his plans. Still, this move may be a slight signal that he wants to play on the queenside. Very reasonable alternatives are 14 c5 and 14 g3 (2 points for both – also 2 points if you intended one of those on your last move).

14 ... ♘f4

Another set-up for Black is to play ...♗d7 and ...♕e7, perhaps aiming for ...b5 at some stage.

* * * *

15 ♗f1

2 points. White should definitely preserve the bishop-pair even though this bishop doesn't look very good for the moment. The bishop-pair is often a strong long-term asset and I'm sure almost any titled player would play this move without much hesitation.

15 ... b6

Stopping c5.

* * * *

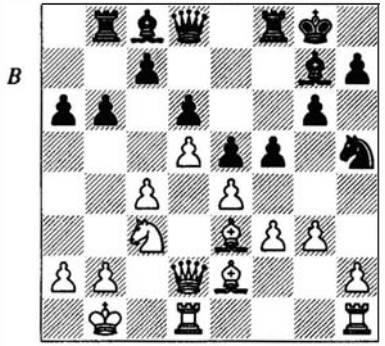
16 g3

2 points. Now that Black's queenside play has been halted, White looks for play on the kingside, and needs to chase the knight back to make progress.

16 ... ♘h5

* * * *

17 ♗e2 *(D)*



3 points. Karpov steadily plays to solidify his own position and deny his opponent any more space than necessary.

17 ... ♘f6

After 17...fxe4, 18 fxe4 ♗h3 would be quite OK for Black because he needn't fear 19 ♗xh5, hence White wouldn't easily get to the f-file. The problem with this idea is of course that White replies 18 ♘xe4 and keeps a promising edge.

* * * *

18 ♗g5

3 points. More typically 'Karpovian' prophylaxis. In retreating the knight to f6, Black was planning an exchange on e4 (or two if White captures with the knight) followed by ...♗h3, not allowing White to take control of the f-file. Now 18...fxe4 is met by 19 ♘xe4, and White is willing to exchange his dark-squared bishop for the f6-knight in order to maintain a knight on e4 or engage in a promising opposite-coloured bishop position, i.e. if Black plays ...♗f5xe4 and White replies ♗d3xe4. Another type of position would occur after 18 exf5 gxf5 19 f4 (2 points). The same points are available if you intended this idea on move 17. In that case White attacks Black's position more aggressively but also gives Black more freedom. Another attempt to prevent Black's plan is 18 h4 but even though it is not totally ridiculous (it would even be quite good if Black embarked on the careless 18...fxe4, when White is much better after 19 ♘xe4), Black does have the strong reply 18...♘h5!, when the move of the h-pawn has weakened White's position more than it has done good, for g4 at some stage would allow Black control of the f4-square. Meanwhile, Black is ready to play ...f4 himself: for instance, 19 ♖dg1 f4! gives Black a good position.

18 ... ♕e8

* * * *

19 ♗d3

2 points. 19 h3 or 19 h4 is again met by 19...♘h5!.

White can instead play to prevent exchanges on e4 by the interesting 19 ♖df1 (2 points). The point of this move becomes clear in the event of 19...fxe4 20 ♗xf6! exf3 21 ♗xg7 fxe2 22 ♖xf8+.

19 ... fxe4

* * * *

20 ♘xe4

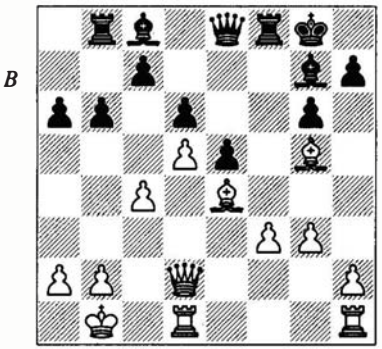
2 points.

20 ... ♘xe4

* * * *

21 ♗xe4 *(D)*

2 points. I have already explained the necessity for not taking back on e4 with the pawn, because Black plays ...♗h3 and stops almost all White's active possibilities by denying White control of the f-file.



21 ... ♗f5

* * * *

22 ♕e2

4 points. This fine little move secures White an edge. The key word to understand is 'flexibility'. The position of the queen is simply improved. 22 ♖hf1 (2 points) is another sensible idea.

22 ... ♗xe4+

* * * *

23 fxe4

2 points. With most of the minor pieces exchanged off, there is no point any more in maintaining a piece on e4,

as White's f-pawn is only going to be left as a weakness.

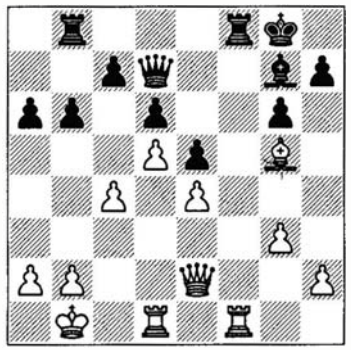
23 ... ♕f7

* * * *

24 ♖hf1

2 points.

24 ... ♕d7 *(D)*



So, wasn't Black's last move just a waste of tempo? Not at all, because if Black didn't threaten to occupy the f-file, White could consider keeping the rooks on the board. This also explains why 22 ♕e2 was more accurate than, for example, 22 ♖hf1.

* * * *

25 g4

2 points. Note how White begins placing his pawns on light squares.

25 ... ♖xf1

* * * *

26 ♖xf1

1 point.

26 ... ♖f8

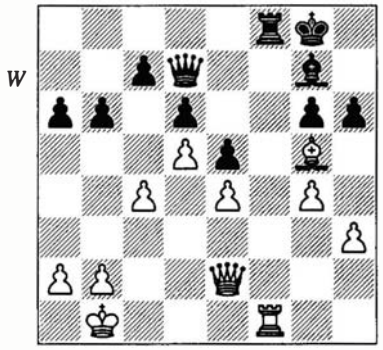
* * * *

27 h3

2 points. By sensibly overprotecting the g4-pawn, White frees his queen from defending that pawn and hence opens the possibility of postponing the rook exchange.

27 ... h6 *(D)*

* * * *



28 ♖xf8+

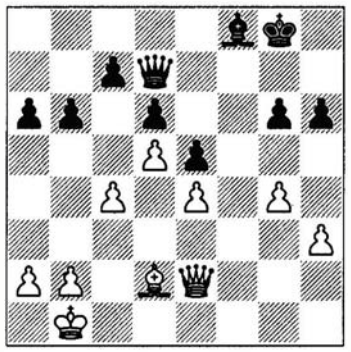
3 points. This is much more accurate than 28 ♗h4, after which 28...♖f4! solves most of Black's problems. White would have to play 29 ♗g3 in order to get rid of the rook before Black takes control of the f-file with ...♕f7, but then 29...♖xf1 30 ♕xf1 ♕f7 is OK for Black since the bishop ending is no more than a draw now that Black hasn't been committed to playing ...g5. This is an important key to understanding the position: White hopes to provoke ...g5, which in a possible bishop ending would give White a further target on the kingside, while Black in turn attempts to avoid this and would rather contemplate the idea of exchanging a pawn with ...h5xg4.

28 ... ♗xf8

* * * *

29 ♗d2 *(D)*

4 points. This is more accurate than 29 ♗h4, which is met by 29...♗e7, when White has little chance of obtaining a real advantage.



29 ... ♔g7

* * * *

30 c5

3 points. White could not have made this breakthrough if he had played 29 ♗e3 (add 1 point if that was your choice) because Black would reply 29...♕a4!, covering a6 and threatening to take the e4-pawn with check. Perhaps Black should have prevented the c5 thrust by 29...a5 but it is understandable that Hansen was reluctant to place another pawn on a dark square.

30 ... dxc5

Now the e5-pawn becomes weak but it would have been worse to allow White a passed a-pawn with 30...bxc5.

* * * *

31 ♕xa6

1 point.

31 ... h5

* * * *

32 ♕e2

2 points.

32 ... hxg4

* * * *

33 ♕xg4

1 point. Although White has quite a pleasant ending after this, 33 hxg4 (2 points) is more awkward for Black.

33 ... ♕xg4

* * * *

34 hxg4

1 point.

34 ... ♔f7

* * * *

35 a4

3 points.

35 ... ♔e8

* * * *

36 a5

2 points.

36 ... ♔d7

* * * *

37 axb6

2 points.

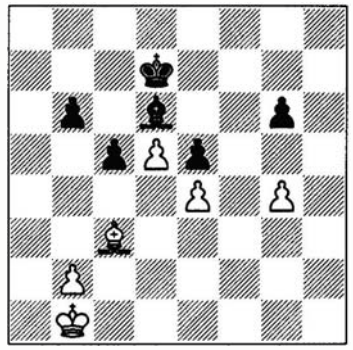
37 ... cxb6

* * * *

38 ♗c3

2 points.

38 ... ♗d6 *(D)*



Reaching this position is White's only chance to play for a win. Take 1 point if you intended ♔c2/♗c3 on moves 35-37 but if Black gets to play ...♔d7 and ...c6, it is not that difficult to make a draw.

* * * *

39 b4

4 points. This fine resource puts Black under pressure and is the only idea that maintains some hope of a full point. Karpov knew at this stage that by exchanging queens he had given away much of the advantage he held in the middlegame, and that the bishop ending would be very difficult, if at all possible, to win. Indeed, when going in for the bishop ending, Karpov was thinking, mistakenly, that 35 ♔c2 ♔e8 36 b4 cxb4 37 ♔b3 ♔d7 38 ♗xb4 ♗xb4 39 ♔xb4 would be a winning pawn ending but 39...c6! easily secures the draw for Black. For a chessplayer this is always a difficult situation: knowing that you have thrown away a promising position, and then having to start all over again. With 39 b4, Karpov admirably continues to pose Black problems. It is also interesting to read Karpov's commentaries to the game, because the position after 38...♗d6 could have been reached in several ways. Karpov explains that he deliberately chose the move-order in the game because it gave Black a further choice (i.e. an opportunity to go wrong), viz. 38...♔d6 (rather than 38...♗d6). Then White would have excellent winning chances after 39 b4 c4 40 b5! ♔c5 41 ♗xe5 ♔xb5 42 ♔c2. This is excellent chess psychology. Although it doesn't make much difference from an objective viewpoint, in an over-the-board situation it makes the defender's task more difficult. It should by now be clear that the b4 idea is White's only chance to play for a win but the timing is very important. We have already seen that in combination with 35 ♔c2 it was not fast enough. Another attempt would be 38 b4 (instead of 38 ♗c3). This looks more logical than first playing the bishop to c3, since when Black plays ...cxb4 he does not threaten the bishop. However, Karpov has carefully taken into account every possible defence for Black. Hence, after 38 b4 c4! 39 b5 ♗c5, Black draws by moving his bishop to d4: 40 ♔b2 ♗d4+ 41 ♔a3 c3. Although White can win the c-pawn, this will mean an exchange of bishops and a drawn pawn ending as White's king cannot penetrate into Black's position.

39 ... cxb4

3 bonus points if you had seen that White wins the c-pawn after 39...c4 40 b5 ♔e7 41 ♔c2 ♔f6 42 ♗d2. This is an important point since otherwise White could just as well have played 38 b4 straight away.

* * * *

40 ♗d2

2 points.

40 ... ♔c7

* * * *

41 ♔c2

1 point.

41 ... b5

* * * *

42 ♔b3

1 point. Take the appropriate number of points if you chose another route to b3.

42 ... ♔d7

* * * *

43 ♗xb4

1 point. 43 ♗e1 (1 point) is also possible, and sets a trap: after 43...♔c7?? 44 ♗xb4 Black cannot avoid an exchange of bishops and thus loses. However, 43...♗e7 inevitably leads to the same type of position as in the game.

43 ... ♗c7

* * * *

44 ♗c3

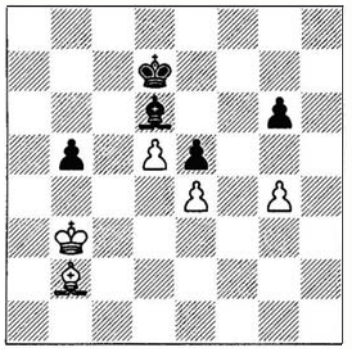
2 points.

44 ... ♗d6

* * * *

45 ♗b2 *(D)*

B



2 points. Black is in zugzwang and cannot save the b-pawn. 45...♔c7 and 45...♔e7 both allow White to exchange bishops with 46 ♗a3, and if the king retreats to the 8th rank there is 46 ♗a3 ♗c7 47 ♗c5 followed by ♔b4xb5.

45 ... b4

* * * *

46 ♗c1

2 points.

46 ... ♗c5

* * * *

47 ♗d2

2 points.

47 ... ♗g1

* * * *

48 ♔xb4

1 point. White has got the most out of the ending and has reached a bishop ending with 3 pawns vs 2. However, since White cannot really penetrate with his king it is still rather unclear whether it will be sufficient for a win.

48 ... ♗f2

* * * *

49 ♔c4

2 points.

49 ... ♗g1

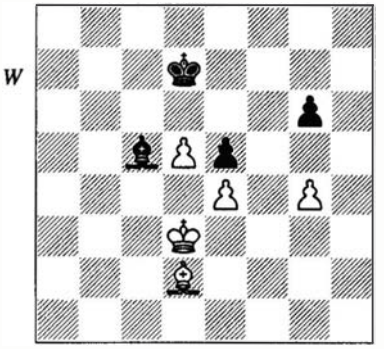
* * * *

50 ♔d3

2 points.

50 ... ♗c5 *(D)*

W



* * * *

51 ♗e3

2 points. White cannot make progress as long as Black's bishop is on the g1-a7 diagonal. Black easily defends the e-pawn and the king deals with any sort of attempt to sneak around via the 8th rank, simply by staying on d7. Therefore White first of all forces Black's bishop away from the g1-a7 diagonal.

51 ... ♗e7

* * * *

52 ♔c4

1 point. Actually, this obvious move throws away the win. 52 g5! (5 points) looks slightly illogical as it apparently only gives Black a target for his bishop, but in fact is the only way to win. We will discuss this in more detail after we have examined the rest of the game.

52 ... ♗a3

* * * *

53 ♗d2

3 points.

53 ... ♗e7

* * * *

54 ♗c3

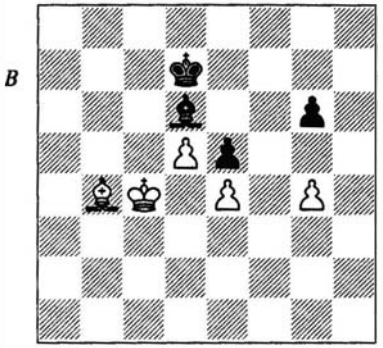
2 points.

54 ... ♗d6

* * * *

55 ♗b4 *(D)*

2 points. Now Black's bishop ends up in a rather tight spot. Indeed, Black was in a kind of zugzwang after his unfortunate 52nd move. Instead Black could have drawn with 52...♗h4. I will return to this after we have examined the entire game, and try to make a comprehensible explanation of which diagonals Black's bishop should and shouldn't be on. There are 2 bonus points if you had noticed that Black couldn't play 54...♗f6 due to 55 g5! ♗g7 56 ♗b4, trapping the bishop.



55 ... ♗b8

* * * *

56 ♔b5

2 points.

56 ... ♗a7

* * * *

57 ♗c5

2 points.

57 ... ♗b8

* * * *

58 d6

2 points. Take 2 more points if you had intended 56 d6 (rather than 56 ♔b5), which is also winning, e.g. 56...♔c6 57 ♗c5 g5 58 ♔b4!, when Black's king is forced to give ground, or he will have to enter a lost pawn ending.

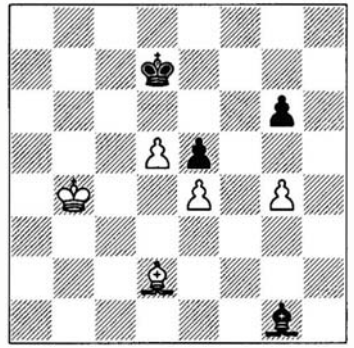
1-0

After 58...g5 59 ♔b6 ♗xd6 60 ♗xd6 ♔xd6 61 ♔b5 White shoulders Black's king away to win the e- and g-pawns.

Evaluation scheme

85-105	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
76-84	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
61-75	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
41-60	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
26-40	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-25	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Now, as promised, we shall take a closer look at the bishop ending, which Karpov thinks is a draw. This may be a correct assessment but there are some important details to point out. We begin our investigation after White's 48th move (48 ♔xb4):



48 ... ♗f2

As I have already explained, White cannot make progress unless Black's bishop is forced away from the g1-a7 diagonal. Actually, for the moment White's only positional threat is to play d6 but this will be worthless if White cannot follow it up by ♔d5. This needs White's king to be on c4, and in that case Black will always be able to meet d6 with ...♔c6. Hence, White correctly aims first of all to transfer his own bishop to the g1-a7 diagonal.

49 ♔c4 ♗g1

50 ♔d3

White could almost trap Black's bishop with 50 ♗c3 ♔d6 51 ♗b4+ ♔d7 52 ♗c5 ♗h2 53 ♗e3 (threatening 54 ♔c5 followed by 55 d6, so Black's next move is forced) 53...♔d6 54 ♔d3 ♗g3 55 ♔e2 ♗h4 56 g5, when the bishop doesn't escape, but paradoxically this diagonal (e1-h4) is the best place for Black's bishop. A closer look at the ending is going to reveal that the bishop is actually a lot safer there than, for instance, on e7. With the black bishop on h4, White cannot make progress.

50 ... ♗c5?

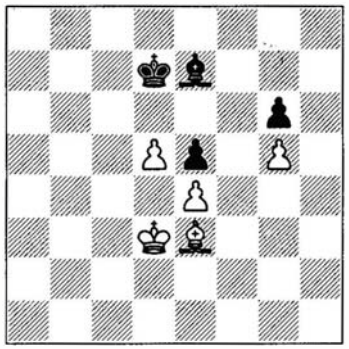
This is, in fact, Black's real blunder in the endgame. Karpov, in his notes to the game, doesn't acknowledge this but instead points to Black's 52nd move as where Black goes wrong. Black should have played 50...♗f2.

51 ♗e3 ♗e7

There are no other sensible places for the bishop. It would be too late to aim for the e1-h4 diagonal by 51...♗b4 because White plays 52 ♔c4, and if 52...♗e1, then 53 ♔c5 followed by 54 d6 is decisive.

52 ♔c4?

This very natural move allows Black to escape. Instead, 52 g5! *(D)* would guarantee a win for White.

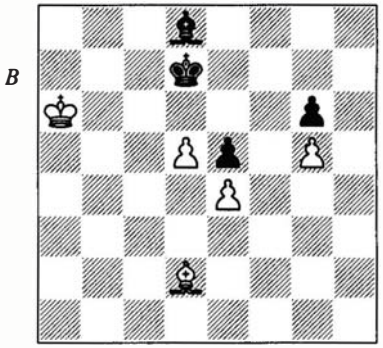


The move looks illogical as it gives Black a target for his bishop but in reality it is an essential ingredient in more or less trapping Black's bishop. Here are some lines and ideas to confirm this:

a) An attempt to escape to the e1-h4 diagonal by 52...♗b4 is easily refuted: after 53 ♔c4 ♗e1 54 ♔c5, White gets in the decisive d6 advance. Black can never allow this to happen.

b) 52...♗d8 53 ♔c4 ♗a5 54 ♔c5 ♗c7 55 ♔b5 is similar to line 'c'.

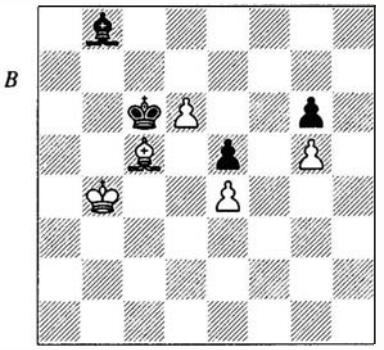
c) 52...♗a3 53 ♔c4 ♗e7 (since Black can't escape onto the e1-h4 diagonal, there is nothing to do but wait) 54 ♗c1 ♗d8 55 ♔b5. White's primary aim is to prevent Black's bishop from escaping to a less cramped place. Then he will attack the e5-pawn in such a way that Black is forced to defend it with ...♗d6. Finally, White will force the black bishop to c7 or b8, and then follow up with a d6 advance, which forces a winning king and pawn ending. You might ask if this is all really possible. Yes it is; since Black can't allow the exchange of his e-pawn for White's g-pawn, it is actually not that difficult. Let us see how it works: 55...♔d6 56 ♗d2 ♔d7 57 ♔a6! *(D)*.



This is a very instructive manoeuvre. Right now Black is always able to meet an attack on the e-pawn (for example by ♗c3) with ...♔d6. However, if White's king were on b7, then this wouldn't be possible, as when White plays ♗c3, and Black replies ...♔d6, there would follow ♔c8, threatening a very picturesque mate with ♗b4+, and this renders Black's defence impossible. Hence, we shall now look at the following lines:

c1) 57...♗e7 58 ♗c3 ♗xg5 59 ♗xe5 (this is just to show that Black can't allow such a type of ending to occur) 59...♗e3 60 ♗g3 g5 61 ♔b5 and White wins easily, e.g. 61...g4 62 e5 ♗g1 63 e6+ ♔e7 64 ♔c6, etc.

c2) 57...♔d6 58 ♔b7 ♔d7 59 ♗c3 ♗c7 60 ♗b2! ♗d6 61 ♔b6! (the king has done its part and now returns to take part in executing the final step of White's winning plan) 61...♗c7+ 62 ♔c5 ♗b8 63 ♔b5 (White needs his king on c4 but first it has to assist in making the c7-square unavailable for Black) 63...♗d6 64 ♗c3 ♗c7 65 ♗a5! (this is why White had to go via b5 with the king) 65...♗b8 (after 65...♗d6 66 ♔c4, 66...♗b8 67 ♗b4 ♗a7 68 ♗c5 ♗b8 69 d6 ♔c6 70 ♔b4 leads to the same thing, and 66...♗e7 67 ♗c3 ♗d6 68 ♗b4 is similar) 66 ♔c4 ♗a7 67 ♗c3 ♔d6 (or 67...♗b8 68 ♗b4 ♗c7 69 d6) 68 ♗b4+ ♔c7 69 ♗c5 ♗b8 70 d6+ ♔c6 71 ♔b4 *(D)* and White wins.

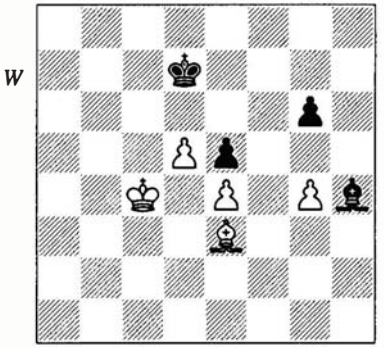


For example, 71...♗xd6 72 ♗xd6 ♔xd6 73 ♔b5 ♔d7 74 ♔c5 ♔e6 75 ♔c6 ♔e7 76 ♔d5 ♔f7 77 ♔xe5 (or simply 77 ♔d6!, aiming for the g-pawn) 77...♔e7 78 ♔d5 ♔d7 79 e5 ♔e7 80 e6 ♔e8.

White can now win by various methods. One is simply 81 e7 ♔d7 82 e8♕+ ♔xe8 83 ♔e6 +–, but he can also force his way to f6 using triangulation: 81 ♔d4 ♔f8 82 ♔e4 ♔e8 (or 82...♔e7 83 ♔e5 +–) 83 ♔d5. Now, since 83...♔d8 84 ♔d6 forces the e-pawn through, White achieves his goal after 83...♔e7 84 ♔e5 followed by 85 ♔f6 with a simple win.

52 ... ♗a3?

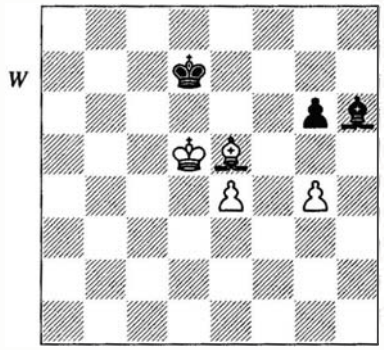
52...♗h4! *(D)* is correct.



I have mentioned it a number of times already but the only way Black can save the position is by having his bishop on the e1-h4 or c1-h6 diagonal. The reason is that Black has to be ready to protect his e5-pawn with his bishop from the outside, i.e. g3 or f4. This is required in the event that White walks his king to b7 (when Black's king is needed on d7), and transfers his bishop to attack the e5-pawn (for example, from c3). This all becomes

comprehensible once we have seen the problems Black faces in the previous note. I don't think that White can make progress, and neither does Karpov, who analyses one winning attempt: 53 ♗c5 ♗g5 54 d6 ♔c6 55 d7 ♗d8 56 ♗b4 ♔xd7 (56...♗b6 57 ♗e7 ♔xd7 58 ♗c5 forces the same thing) 57 ♔d5 ♗f6 58 ♗c3 ♗g7 59 ♗xe5 ♗h6! *(D)*.

It may seem surprising that White cannot win this endgame, but the e-pawn is easily dealt with, and, in order to win, White's king would need to gain access to the f6-square. I tried 60 ♗f6 ♗c1 61 e5 ♗d2 62 e6+ ♔e8 63 ♗d4 ♗g5 64 ♗c5 ♔d8 65 ♔e5 ♔e8, but kept banging my head against a brick wall.



53 ♗d2!

Now Black ends up in zugzwang, as his bishop is forced to a rather unfortunate diagonal. There is nothing from here on to add to the main game. White wins.

Game 9

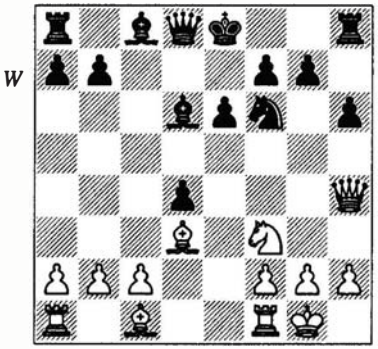
Rarely does Karpov get outplayed but in this game Lautier plays extremely well, and punishes Karpov for some inaccuracies in his favourite 4...♘d7 line of the Caro-Kann.

You are White and we begin after Black's 12th move.

Lautier – Karpov
Biel 1997
Caro-Kann

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♘g5 ♘gf6 6 ♗d3 e6 7 ♘1f3 ♗d6 8 ♕e2 h6 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 10 ♕xe4 c5 11 0-0 ♘f6 12 ♕h4 cxd4 *(D)*

Karpov had previously continued 12...♕c7 at this point but, perhaps fearing an improvement, decided to deviate.



* * * *

13 ♖e1

3 points. It is not very important to recapture the pawn for the moment. Black's main concern in this line is his king's safety, and hence White quietly improves his position with a natural developing move. Alternatively, 13 ♕xd4 (1 point) would move the queen away from the kingside, and allow Black to castle.

13 ... ♗d7

13...0-0? is suicidal in view of the thematic sacrifice 14 ♗xh6! gxh6 15 ♕xh6, when Black is defenceless.

* * * *

14 ♘xd4

2 points. 1 point if you wanted to play this on your last move. White can also choose to develop his bishop: 14 ♗d2 and 14 ♗g5 are both sound alternatives – 2 points for either of them.

14 ... ♕a5

Black gains a tempo by attacking the rook, and hence for the moment parries the threat of ♘f5.

* * * *

15 ♗e3

2 points.

15 ... ♔f8

* * * *

16 ♗f4

3 points. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops increases White's control of the centre, and is hence a good strategic decision. Note that White only does this because Black has lost the right to castle, and has to spend a few moves developing fully. Incidentally, Lautier claims that Black was threatening 16...g5 17 ♕h3 e5 18 ♘f5 e4, winning a piece, but this does not look right since instead of the blunder 18 ♘f5?, White has the much stronger 18 ♕f3!, with the better position. Therefore, other moves also come

into consideration, such as 16 ♖ad1 (3 points) or 16 ♘f3 (1 point).

16 ... ♗xf4

* * * *

17 ♕xf4

1 point.

17 ... ♖c8

* * * *

18 ♘f3

2 points. This is a logical way to make use of White's control of the centre, and in particular the e5-square. 18 ♕d6+ (1 point) is probably only temporarily annoying. Black replies 18...♔g8 and prepares to drive the queen back with ...♕c5.

18 ... ♔e7

* * * *

19 ♕g3

3 points. A strong prophylactic move, as Black had the positional threat of playing ...♖fd8 followed by ...♔f8, which would solve all his problems. 19 ♘e5 (1 point) is an alternative but there is no need to occupy the e5-square yet, and this doesn't address the ...♖fd8 problem.

19 ... ♕b4

2 bonus points if you had noticed that Black couldn't simply continue 19...♘h5?, in view of 20 ♖e5 ♘xg3 21 ♖xa5 +–.

* * * *

20 ♘e5

2 points. White occupies the e5-square at the right moment, as White now defends against Black's primary idea, 20...♕g4.

20 ... g5

This is slightly weakening. Lautier mentions 20...♖hg8 as an improvement but in that case Black's king is stuck in the centre.

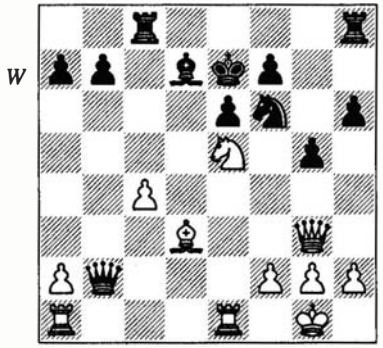
* * * *

21 c4

3 points. This cuts out any ideas of exchanging queens, as White shuts off the fourth rank. However, it still has to be calculated that Black cannot just take on b2. Hence, White could also consider first protecting the b-pawn with 21 ♖ab1 (1 point). This would be a better way of protecting the queenside than 21 b3, which creates a few holes on the dark squares.

21 ... ♖hd8

21...♕xb2 (D) is a major alternative. How would you then continue?



A logical continuation for White is 22 ♖ab1 ♕xa2 23 ♖xb7 (2 points) 23...♖hd8, when he definitely has good attacking prospects. Then:

a) Lautier believes 24 ♕h3! (2 more points if you had seen this far) to be the best way to step up the pressure. White attacks the h6-pawn while keeping an eye on e6. It also contains a sneaky trap, as Black might miss the threat of 25 ♘g6+ ♔e8 26 ♖xe6+! fxe6 27 ♕xe6+! ♗xe6 28 ♖e7#.

b) 24 ♕e3 (2 points) is also good, as Lautier's suggestion 24...♕a5 (intending 25...♕c5) can be met by 25 ♗g6! with a large advantage.

* * * *

22 ♕h3

2 points.

22 ... h5

* * * *

23 ♕e3

2 points.

23 ... g4

* * * *

24 a3

2 points. 1 point if on this or either of the two previous moves you chose to play safe with ♖ab1. Also 1 point for the greedy 24 ♕xa7.

24 ... ♕xb2

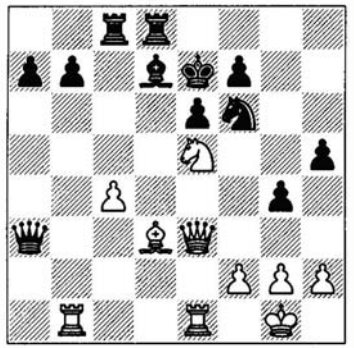
24...♕c5 loses to 25 ♕g5, intending 26 ♕g7. If 25...♖g8, there is 26 ♕xf6+!.

* * * *

25 ♖ab1

2 points.

25 ... ♕xa3 *(D)*



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26 ♘xf7

3 points. This is decisive. 2 points if this was your choice on the previous move. 26 ♖xb7 (1 point) is also feasible but clearly not as strong as the text-move.

26 ... ♕c5

* * * *

27 ♘xd8

2 points. Or 27 ♕xc5+ (2 points).

27 ... ♕xe3

* * * *

28 ♖xe3

1 point. 28 fxe3 (1 point) is also good as White can then utilize the open f-file.

28 ... ♔xd8

* * * *

29 ♖xb7

1 point.

29 ... a5

* * * *

30 ♖a7

1 point. Obviously, White should attack the pawn from behind.

30 ... ♖c5

* * * *

31 f4

3 points. There are probably other good moves but this is clearly the simplest. White is now threatening ♖e5 and hence forces Black to open files on the kingside by capturing *en passant*.

31 ... gxf3

* * * *

32 ♖xf3

1 point.

32 ... ♘e8

* * * *

33 ♖f7

2 points.

33 ... ♘c7

* * * *

34 ♖h7

2 points.

34 ... ♗e8

* * * *

35 ♔f2

2 points. Also 2 points if this was your choice on the previous move. It is of course a good idea for White to centralize his king.

35 ... ♔c8

* * * *

36 ♖h8

2 points.

36 ... ♔d7

* * * *

37 ♔e3

1 point. This was also feasible on the previous move, i.e. 36 ♔e3. Black can then play 36...♔b8, trapping the rook, but White still wins by 37 ♖hxc7! ♖xc7 38 ♖xa5.

37 ... e5

* * * *

38 ♗e2

2 points.

38 ... ♗g6

* * * *

39 ♗xh5

1 point.

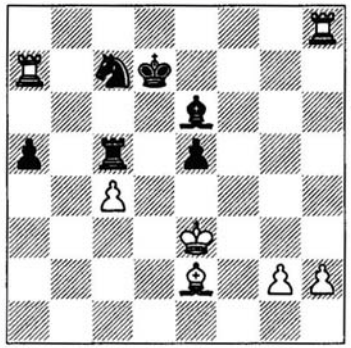
39 ... ♗f5

* * * *

40 ♗e2

2 points. 40 ♗f7 (2 points) is also good.

40 ... ♗e6 *(D)*



The position is of course easily winning for White and there are so many ways to finish the job that I have decided simply to give the conclusion to the game:

41 h4 ♔d6 42 ♖h6 ♔e7 43 h5 1-0

Evaluation scheme

51-60	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
45-50	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
38-44	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
30-37	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-29	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 10

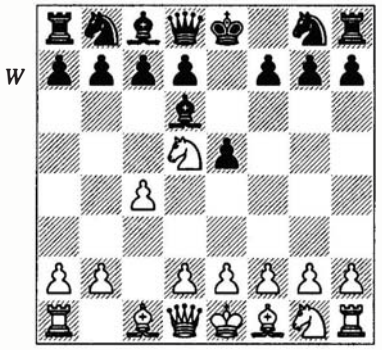
I came across this game while researching material for the 'advantage in development' section in Chapter 1. It is a wonderful creative display by the Spanish grandmaster Illescas, which reminds us to look for original ideas.

We begin after Black's rather unusual 3rd move.

Illescas – Arizmendi Martinez
Pamplona 1997/8
English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♗b4 3 ♘d5 ♗d6 *(D)*

This is rarely seen but has nevertheless been given a try by a few strong players. 3...♗e7 is more common, while the provocative 3...♗c5 4 b4 ♗f8!? is also interesting.



* * * *

4 d4

3 points. This is the only move that seriously questions Black's 3rd move. 4 g3 (1 point) isn't bad though, and might, after 4...♘f6 5 ♗g2 c6 6 ♘c3, lead to a fairly normal position since Black would have to move his bishop again in order to develop further.

4 ... c6

* * * *

5 dxe5

2 points.

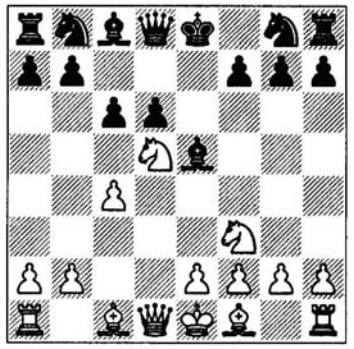
5 ... ♗xe5

* * * *

6 ♘f3

2 points.

6 ... d6 *(D)*



* * * *

7 ♘e3

3 points. This leads to an interesting position. Are Black's bishops superior to the knights, or is it the other way around? Illescas shows that White can be quite satisfied with his knights. Other moves are also possible, though, and 7 ♘c3, 7 ♘f4 and 7 ♘xe5 dxe5 8 ♘c3 all deserve 1 point.

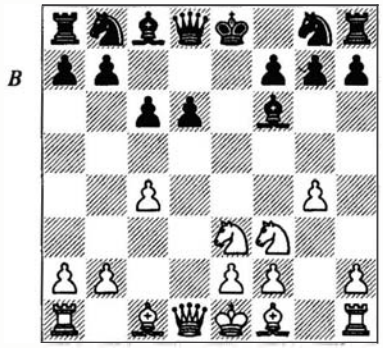
7 ... ♗f6

* * * *

8 g4 *(D)*

5 points. Very strong, but such radical ideas are becoming more common

as modern opening play evolves. Here it is practically the only chance to play for an opening advantage. The more conventional 8 g3 (1 point) is too passive and allows Black an easy game with 8...♘e7 9 ♗g2 0-0 10 0-0 ♘a6. In this case Black's bishops are well placed to restrain White's knights. The text-move suggests that Black probably should have played 7...♘f6.



8 ... h6

Black can hardly allow the space-gaining g5, and understandably takes precautions against it. Another attempt is 8...g6 (to keep the bishop on the h8-a1 diagonal) but then White goes for an attack with 9 ♕c2 ♘e7 10 ♗d2 followed by 0-0-0 and h4-h5.

* * * *

9 h4

2 points.

9 ... ♘e7

* * * *

10 ♖g1

3 points. Another very strong move: White threatens g5. This could also have been prepared with 10 ♗g2 (1 point) but it turns out that in this case White isn't quite ready to advance the g-pawn. If we go a little further we see that Black obtains promising counter-chances: 10...♘a6, with the point that 11 g5?! is met by 11...hxg5 12 hxg5 ♖xh1+ 13 ♗xh1 ♗xg5 14 ♘xg5 ♕a5+ 15 ♔f1 ♕xg5 16 ♕xd6 ♗h3+, with good chances for Black.

10 ... g5

This is very weakening. 10...g6 is more resilient.

* * * *

11 ♕c2

2 points. It is important to convince oneself that ...gxh4 isn't really a threat. Indeed, 11...gxh4 would now give White a large lead in development after 12 ♗d2 followed by 0-0-0, when White has much the better chances.

11 ... ♕b6

It is clear that Black would be in trouble if White were allowed to play ♗d2 and 0-0-0.

* * * *

12 hxg5

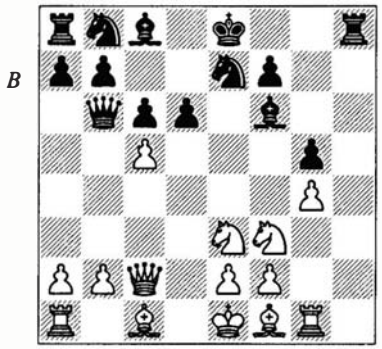
2 points. White's last two moves could also have been inverted. So, if you had intended 11 hxg5 followed by 12 ♕c2, please take the appropriate number of points.

12 ... hxg5

* * * *

13 c5 *(D)*

4 points. A very fine idea. White is doing everything he can to exploit his lead in development, and with this positional pawn sacrifice he makes the c4-square available to his knight. 13 ♘d1 (1 point) is solid but rather passive.



13 ... ♕b4+

2 bonus points if you had seen that White regains his pawn after 13...♕xc5 14 ♕xc5 dxc5 15 ♘c4 ♖g8 16 ♘d6+ ♔f8 17 ♘e4, although there might be other ways to maintain the pressure. 13...dxc5 could be relatively best but even in this case 14 ♘c4 ♕c7 15 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 16 ♘xg5 is very good for White.

* * * *

14 ♗d2

2 points.

14 ... ♕xb2

* * * *

15 ♕xb2

2 points.

15 ... ♗xb2

* * * *

16 ♖b1

1 point.

16 ... ♗a3

* * * *

17 cxd6

1 point.

17 ... ♗xd6

* * * *

18 ♘xg5

1 point. The last few moves have been virtually forced. If Black could catch up in development he would not be doing so badly, but here White has a substantial advantage due to his more aggressively posted pieces.

18 ... ♘d7

* * * *

19 ♘e4

2 points.

19 ... ♗c7

* * * *

20 ♘f5

3 points. Take 2 bonus points if this was your idea with 19 ♘e4. The idea employed by White is much stronger than 19 ♘c4 or 20 ♘c4 (both 1 point). The knight is not doing nearly as much from c4 as it is from f5. After 20 ♘c4 ♘b6 21 ♗c3 ♖h4 Black solves most of his difficulties.

20 ... ♘xf5

* * * *

21 gxf5

1 point.

21 ... b6

* * * *

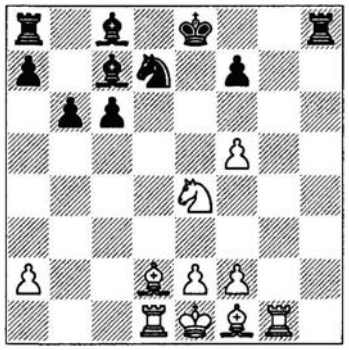
22 ♖d1 *(D)*

4 points. Such quiet moves are especially unpleasant for someone with his back against the wall. White would have liked to play 22 ♗c3 (1 point) but 22...♗e5 interferes, and solves most of Black's problems. However, 22 ♖b3 (3 points), intending to activate the rook via the 3rd rank, is nearly as good as the text-move. Then 22...♗b7 23 ♗g5 is unpleasant for Black.

22 ... ♗h2

White's idea with his last move is seen in the event of 22...♗b7?!, after

B



which 23 ♗c3 is good, now that Black doesn't have 23...♗e5. 22...♗a6 is another attempt but then again Black's king is caught in the centre after 23 ♗g5!.

* * * *

23 ♖h1

2 points.

23 ... ♗e5

* * * *

24 ♘d6+

2 points.

24 ... ♔f8

* * * *

25 ♖xh8+

2 points. The move-order of White's last two moves is important. Take 2 bonus points if you noticed that Black couldn't play 24...♔e7 owing to 25 ♗g5+!. If White had inverted the two moves, and played 24 ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 25 ♘d6+, Black could indeed have replied 25...♔e7 with a much improved version.

25 ... ♗xh8

* * * *

26 ♗g2

2 points.

26 ... ♗a6

* * * *

27 ♗xc6

1 point.

27 ... ♖d8

* * * *

28 ♘e4

2 points. This is the cleanest, although other moves would win too, such as 28 ♗b4 (1 point).

1-0

Black resigned due to the threats of 29 ♗b4+ and 29 ♗h6+.

Evaluation scheme

50-58	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
46-49	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
41-45	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
36-40	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
16-35	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-15	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 11

The English Defence appeals to creative and original players and has undergone a renaissance lately. One major advantage of the opening is its large amount of relatively unexplored territory, which leaves much scope for finding new ideas. One player who has added much to the opening's popularity is GM Alexander Shabalov. Here is one of his best games with the opening. You have Black and start after White's 7th move.

Khenkin – Shabalov
Koszalin 1999
English Defence

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6 3 e4 ♗b7 4 ♗d3 f5 5 exf5 ♗b4+ 6 ♔f1 ♘f6 7 ♗e2 *(D)*

This move received a warm welcome when it was first played in Beliavsky-Short, Groningen FIDE 1997 but has since been subjected to more critical investigation.

B

* * * *

7 ... 0-0

3 points. The alternatives cannot really be recommended:

a) If7...exf5, the 8 c5 idea, as in the game, is even stronger.

b) 7...♗d6 saves the bishop but allows the rather disruptive 8 ♗h5+, which is good for White.

8 c5

* * * *

8 ... bxc5

2 points. 8...♘c6 (1 point) has been tried on a few occasions but the complications after 9 a3 ♘xd4 10 axb4 ♘xe2 have favoured White, both after 11 ♕xe2 and 11 ♘xe2.

9 a3

* * * *

9 ... ♗a5

1 point.

10 dxc5

This is White's main idea. The black bishop is almost trapped on the queenside. The point of 7 ♗e2 also becomes clear in this very line, since if White had instead played 7 c5 immediately, Black could have replied 7...bxc5 8 a3 c4!, saving the bishop.

* * * *

10 ... ♘e4

5 points. This is much stronger than 10...♘d5 (1 point), as played in the original Beliavsky-Short game.

10...c6? saves the bishop but is positionally horrible. The b7-bishop has no future and the pawn-structure is much in White's favour.

11 b4

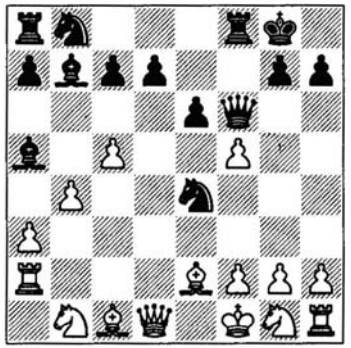
This is probably too greedy. 11 ♘f3 is more prudent.

* * * *

11 ... ♕f6

3 points. This is Shabalov's own idea, and is an interesting mix between ideas that occurred in previous games. 11...♖xf5 (1 point) seems less accurate after Shabalov's convincing demolition of White's position in this game.

12 ♖a2 *(D)*



* * * *

12 ... ♗d5

2 points. 12...♘xf2 13 ♔xf2 ♕xf5+ 14 ♘f3 ♕xb1 15 ♖b2 gives White a clear advantage, and 12...♕xf5 13 ♘f3 doesn't look convincing either. With the text-move Black uses all his pieces dynamically in the attack.

13 ♖b2

* * * *

13 ... ♘c6

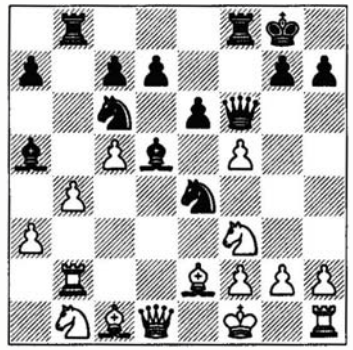
2 points.

14 ♘f3

* * * *

14 ... ♖ab8 *(D)*

2 points. Curiously, the b-file seems to be Black's main avenue for executing the attack. In the game Ippolito-Shabalov, Linares open 2000, Black's opening was put to a further test with 14 bxa5 but here too it stood up well: 14...♖ab8 (incidentally, this shows an important difference between 11...♕f6 and 11...♖xf5: with the rook back on the first rank, Black can go for counterplay on the b-file – this is one of Shabalov's main ideas) 15 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 16 ♗d3 (there are other pretty lines such as 16 ♗e3 ♕a1 17 ♗d3 ♗c4!, when Black wins) 16...♕a1 17 ♘e2? ♗b3 18 ♕e1 ♘xc5 19 ♕d2 ♘xd3 20 ♕xd3 ♘e5 21 ♕c3 ♕xb1 22 ♕xe5 ♗c4 23 ♕c3 ♕a2 24 ♕d2 ♕xd2 25 ♗xd2 ♖b1+ 26 ♗e1 ♖b2 27 fxe6 ♗xe2+ 28 ♔g1 ♖b1 0-1. A beautiful game.



15 fxe6

This opens a file for Black but it is not easy to suggest an improvement for White.

* * * *

15 ... dxe6

2 points.

16 h4

* * * *

16 ... ♘xc5

3 points. This appears the most convincing but 16...♘xb4 (3 points) 17 axb4 ♗xb4 is a very good alternative, after which the attack looks equally dangerous, e.g. 18 ♕c2 ♗xc5 19 ♗d3 ♘xf2 20 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 21 ♗xh7+ ♔h8, with a strong attack.

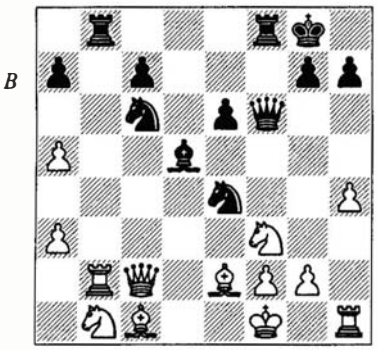
17 ♕c2

* * * *

17 ... ♘e4

2 points.

18 bxa5 *(D)*



* * * *

18 ... ♘d4

3 points. 18...♘d4 would also have been the reply to 18 ♗d3. With this knight, Black now has all his forces joining in the attack, while White is far behind in development.

19 ♕d3

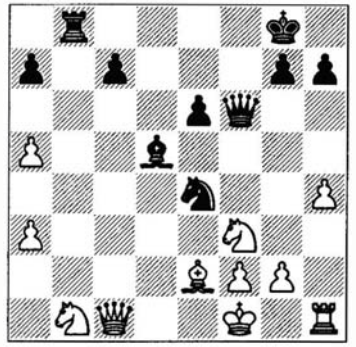
* * * *

19 ... ♘b3

2 points. Now the b-file begins to look especially vulnerable.

20 ♖c2

20 ♕e3 ♘xc1 21 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22 ♕xc1 (D) is a better defence. In that case, how would you continue the attack?



22...♕b2! (3 points) is best, and leads to a much superior ending: 23 ♕xb2 ♖xb2 24 ♘bd2 (24 ♗d3 ♘xf2 −+) 24...♘xd2+ 25 ♘xd2 ♖xd2 26 ♖h3 ♖c2!? (26...♗xg2+ 27 ♔xg2 ♖xe2 28 ♖c3 ♖e5 ∓) 27 ♗d3 (27 ♖d3? allows 27...♖xe2 28 ♔xe2 ♗c4, winning) 27...♖c1+ 28 ♔e2 and now both 28...♗xg2 and 28...c5 should win for Black – analysis by Stohl.

* * * *

20 ... ♘bc5

2 points.

21 ♖xc5

21 ♕e3 loses to 21...♖xb1 22 ♖xc5 ♘xc5 23 ♕xc5 ♕a1.

* * * *

21 ... ♘xc5

1 point.

22 ♕c2

* * * *

22 ... ♗e4

1 point.

23 ♕xc5

* * * *

23 ... ♖xb1

1 point.

0-1

The threats of 24...♕a1, 24...♕b2, 24...♕f4, and probably a couple more, are too much to handle.

Evaluation scheme

33-40	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
29-32	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
24-28	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
18-23	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
11-17	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-10	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

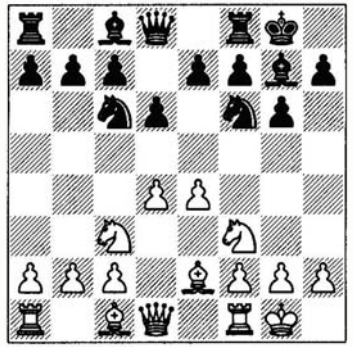
Game 12

This game is a fine positional squeeze of a rather uncommon line of the Pirc.

You are White and we begin after Black's unusual 6...♘c6.

Gligorić – Nevednichy
Novi Sad tt 1999
Pirc Defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 ♘f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2 0-0 6 0-0 ♘c6 *(D)*



* * * *

7 d5

2 points. This is the only way to give Black any real trouble. It is clear that Black's last move was aimed at getting in ...e5, and thus other moves would have allowed Black to carry out his plan. It is true that White would often not compromise his centre pawns as early as this but the advantages gained by kicking the knight are much greater than the disadvantages of the slightly inflexible pawn-centre.

7 ... ♘b8

7...♘e5 and 7...♘b4 are the alternatives but White has had no problems demonstrating an advantage after these moves.

* * * *

8 ♖e1

2 points. This is a very useful waiting move. It is almost certain that the rook's best place will be e1, whereas it is not yet clear where the dark-squared bishop should be. Someday the rook might also be helpful in the preparation of an e5 thrust. Feel free to add 1 point if you chose 8 a4 or 8 h3, which are other sensible continuations.

8 ... c6

Black begins the attack on White's centre. There are two other options:

a) 8...♗g4 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♗xf3 is slightly better for White, due to his bishop-pair.

b) 8...e5!? (this space-gaining move is perhaps Black's best) 9 dxe6 ♗xe6 10 ♗f4 (10 ♘d4 ♗d7 11 ♗g5 h6 12 ♗h4 ♘c6 13 ♘xc6 bxc6 14 f4 ♕b8! gave Black counterplay in Ehlvest-Svidler, Novosibirsk 1995) 10...♘c6 11 h3 h6 12 ♕d2 with slightly superior chances for White, Geller-G.Kuzmin, USSR 1974.

* * * *

9 a4

3 points. This typical but nevertheless strong move gains space on the queenside. Indeed, Black's recurrent problem seems to be his lack of space.

9 ... a5

This is such a natural reaction that it can hardly be wrong, but Black might wish to look for an improvement around here, if not earlier. Black's

main cause for concern is his bad development, and with 9...a5 he is almost destined to try to keep his pawn on c6, as any move with it, be it ...c5 or ...cxd5, creates an ugly hole on b5. The alternatives do not seem that inspiring though:

a) 9...cxd5 10 exd5 ♗g4 11 a5 ♗xf3 12 ♗xf3 a6 13 ♗e3 ♘bd7 14 ♘a4 ♖c8 15 ♘b6 ♘xb6 16 ♗xb6 ♕e8 17 ♗d4 gave White an edge in Miles-Seirawan, Lone Pine 1976, in view of his space advantage and bishop-pair.

b) 9...♗d7 10 a5 ♘a6 11 dxc6 ♗xc6 12 e5 dxe5 13 ♘xe5 ♕xd1 14 ♗xd1 e6 15 ♘xc6 bxc6 16 ♘a4 is equally pleasant for White, Yermolinsky-Ginsburg, New York 1989.

c) 9...♘bd7 10 a5 ♘c5 11 ♗f1 ♗d7 looks like Black's best set-up, with only a small disadvantage.

* * * *

10 ♘d4

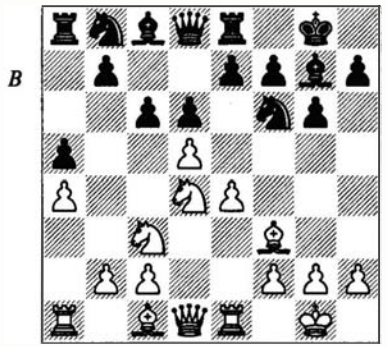
2 points. This is another strong move, which prevents Black from developing his queenside for the moment.

10 ... ♖e8

* * * *

11 ♗f3 *(D)*

3 points. I will give 2 points for 11 ♗e3 and 1 point for 11 ♗f4, which are both sensible developing moves but lack the sharpness of 11 ♗f3. The bishop is ideally placed on f3, where it exerts indirect pressure on the black queenside, retains control of g4/h5 and moves away from the e-file. Take 1 bonus point if you thought of this when you played 10 ♘d4. Also, add 3 bonus points if you saw that Black's best defence would be 10...♗d7! 11 ♗f3 ♘a6, because White does not get much from 12 dxc6 bxc6 13 e5 dxe5 14 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 15 ♗xc6 ♕xd1 16 ♘xd1 ♖ad8, when Black is very active. White should instead proceed more quietly with, for example, 12 ♗f4, with an edge.



11 ... ♘fd7

Black's purposeless 10th move has brought him into trouble. The positional threat of exchanging on c6 followed by playing e5 is annoying, and almost forces this awkward move.

* * * *

12 ♗e3

1 point. It is time to complete development, and with Black having effectively prevented e5, the bishop is much better on e3 than on any other square.

12 ... ♕c7

This is the only way Black can ever get his pieces into play but before you move on, there are 3 bonus points if you noticed that 11...♕c7 12 ♗e3 ♘bd7 would have run into the trick 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♘xc6!, when 14...♕xc6 is met by 15 e5!.

* * * *

13 h3

3 points. Another fine move. Now there will be no rest for Black's e5-knight, as White will always be able to drive it away with f4.

Only 1 point for 13 ♕d2, which looks like a sensible move at first sight but allows the black knight too much playing room; after 13...♘e5 14 ♗e2 ♘g4 15 ♗f4 White just preserves the bishop-pair but has been unnecessarily disturbed.

13 ... ♘e5

* * * *

14 ♗e2

1 point. White should keep the bishop-pair.

14 ... ♘a6

* * * *

15 f4

2 points. There is no reason why White should not grab more space.

15 ... ♘d7

* * * *

16 ♗f3

2 points. This move puts the bishop on its ideal diagonal, even though it is closed. It turns out that the bishop does an excellent job by reinforcing the centre and White sometimes toys with the idea of blowing up the position with e5.

16 ... ♘b4

A very natural move. The knight is safe on b4 and defends c6. 16...♘ac5 looks more active as it exerts more influence on the centre, but White can then convert his space advantage into a promising initiative with 17 dxc6 bxc6 18 e5! – 3 bonus points if you already had that idea in mind.

* * * *

17 ♕d2

2 points.

17 ... e5

* * * *

18 dxe6

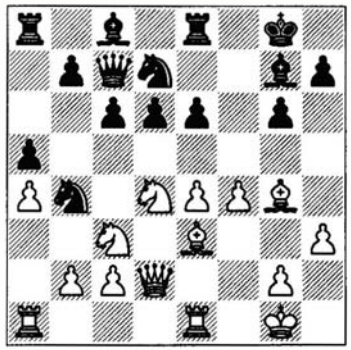
2 points for not being put off course by Black's sudden activity. Other moves are certainly not advisable as they allow Black to establish a stronghold on e5.

18 ... fxe6

* * * *

19 ♗g4 *(D)*

A full 5 points for this disruptive move, which is more accurate than 19 ♗e2 (2 points), after which Black can try 19...d5, when the knight can come to c5 afterwards.



19 ... ♘f6

* * * *

20 ♗e2

1 point.

20 ... e5

This is Black's best defence but I wonder why he did not move his knight to b6 on move 19, where it would have been much better placed than on f6.

* * * *

21 ♘f3

1 point. Also 1 point for 21 ♗c4+, after which White must take 21...d5!? into account. But 3 points for 21 fxe5 dxe5 22 ♗c4+, which reduces Black's possibilities somewhat. White then has a distinct advantage after 22...♔h8 23 ♘f3 ♗e6 24 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 25 ♖ad1.

21 ... ♗e6

As he has been given the chance, Black should try 21...d5!.

* * * *

22 fxe5

1 point.

22 ... dxe5 *(D)*

* * * *

23 ♘g5

2 points. Black has managed to solve most of his problems so far, but after this move he must concede the bishop-pair. 1 point for 23 ♖ad1, which is also sensible but allows Black to preserve his bishop-pair by continuing 23...♖ad8 24 ♕c1 ♔h8.

23 ... ♖ad8

* * * *

24 ♘xe6

1 point.

24 ... ♖xe6

* * * *

25 ♕c1

1 point. Add 1 point if you wanted to play this on the previous move, i.e. 24 ♕c1, which amounts to more or less the same thing.

25 ... ♔h8

* * * *

26 ♖f1

3 points. There is 1 point for 26 ♗c4 but as White can always play that, it is more accurate first to activate the rook.

26 ... ♘h5

* * * *

27 ♗xh5

1 point. Black's previous move must have been the result of a moment's over-optimism, after emerging from a rather suspicious-looking position without too much damage. 26...♖ed6 is far more circumspect, with only an edge for White.

27 ... gxh5

* * * *

28 ♖f5

1 point.

28 ... h4

* * * *

29 ♗g5

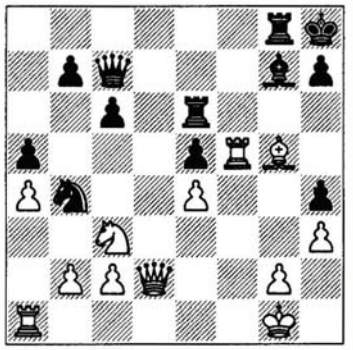
1 point. Black's h4-pawn appears doomed.

29 ... ♖g8

* * * *

30 ♕d2 *(D)*

3 points. Good technique. White cannot win without activating his queenside and the h4-pawn is not running anywhere. 30 ♗xh4 (1 point) 30...♗h6 gives Black some counterplay, which perhaps in reality is non-existent, but in practice might be a little annoying.



30 ... ♖g6

* * * *

31 ♖af1

1 point. The first step is accomplished: the inactive pieces have been brought into play.

31 ... ♕b6+

* * * *

32 ♔h1

2 points. 1 point for those who sought exchanges with 32 ♕f2, and 2 bonus points for those who avoided this on the grounds of 32...♕xf2+ 33 ♖1xf2 ♗f8! 34 ♗e3 ♗d6, when Black holds on to his pawn a little longer. White is still better, but not as much as in the game.

32 ... ♘a6

* * * *

33 b3

1 point.

33 ... ♕d4

* * * *

34 ♕e1

2 points, but 3 points for 34 ♖1f2, which looks even more accurate.

34 ... ♘b4

3 bonus points for noticing that 34...♗h6 35 ♗f6+ ♖xf6 (or 35...♗g7 36 ♗xh4) 36 ♖xf6 ♗d2 loses an exchange to 37 ♘e2!, or that White wins after 37 ♕xh4 ♗g5 38 ♕f2!.

* * * *

35 ♖1f2

1 point.

35 ... h6

* * * *

36 ♗xh4

1 point.

36 ... ♘d5 *(D)*

* * * *

37 exd5

3 points for not being put off course by Black's surprising last move, which was definitely the best chance for a swindle. However, White has more

than one good reply. There are 2 points for those who preferred 37 ♘xd5 cxd5 38 ♖f7!? (or 38 ♖e2), which also leaves White clearly on top.

37 ... ♕xh4

* * * *

38 dxc6

1 point.

38 ... ♖xc6

A full 5 bonus points for those who noticed both the attempted swindle 38...♖xg2? and the easiest way out of the mess: 39 ♔xg2 ♗f6+ 40 ♔f3/f1 ♕xh3+ 41 ♔e2 ♕g4+ 42 ♔d2 ♗g5+ 43 ♖xg5, winning.

* * * *

39 ♕e4

2 points. Black must now either allow White too much control or have to accept an exchange of queens, which makes the win easier for White.

39 ... ♕xe4

40 ♘xe4 ♖d8

* * * *

41 ♖f7

2 points.

41 ... ♖d4

* * * *

42 ♖e2

1 point, but add 2 bonus points if you had seen this way of maintaining control on move 39.

42 ... b6

* * * *

43 g4

2 points. White's advantage lies on the kingside: the terribly strong knight on e4 and the 2 vs 1 majority are the decisive factors.

43 ... ♖b4

* * * *

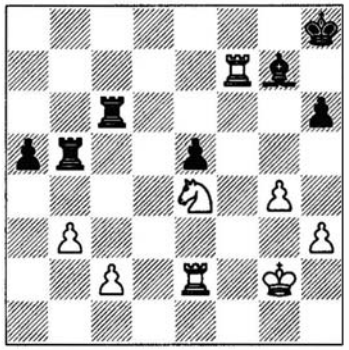
44 ♔g2

1 point.

44 ... b5

45 axb5 ♖xb5 *(D)*

W



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46 ♖a7

2 points. This appears to be the most exact as any attempt to reduce material is nipped in the bud. 1 point for 46 ♖d2.

46 ... ♖d5

* * * *

47 ♘g3

2 points. After establishing firm control, the time has come for White to make real progress. The knight is headed for f5 or h5.

47 ... ♖dc5

* * * *

48 c4

1 point.

48 ... ♖c7

49 ♘e4 was a threat, so to avoid losing more material Black is forced to play this move.

* * * *

49 ♖xc7

1 point. There is no need to try to avoid an exchange as Black can have it wherever he wants.

49 ... ♖xc7

* * * *

50 ♘h5

2 points. This is the simplest. 1 point for 50 ♘f5.

50 ... ♖b7

* * * *

51 ♘xg7

2 points. The rook ending is easily won, so no points for hesitating to go in for this.

51 ... ♔xg7

* * * *

52 ♖xe5

2 points.

52 ... ♖xb3

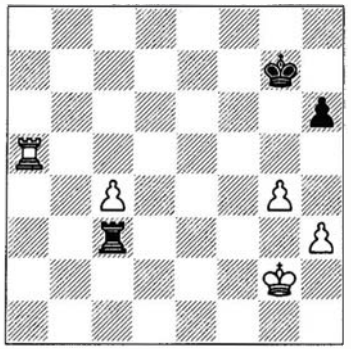
* * * *

53 ♖xa5

1 point.

53 ... ♖c3 *(D)*

W



* * * *

54 ♖c5

3 points. There is a rule of thumb when playing rook endings with a passed pawn, as to where the rook is best placed. In descending order, the best place is:

a) behind the pawn;
b) to the side of the pawn;
c) in front of the pawn.

However, there is a higher principle that activity is vital, and hence White chooses 'c' voluntarily in this case. 54 c5?! would make the rook very passive, and indeed most probably throw away the win.

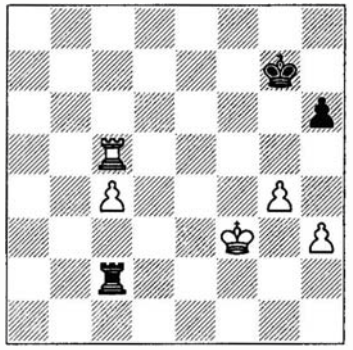
54 ... ♖c2+

* * * *

55 ♔f3 *(D)*

3 points. 2 points for 55 ♔g3 ♖c3+ 56 ♔h4, which is also a win but only after some accurate play: 56...♔g6 57 ♖c6+ ♔h7 58 c5 ♔g7 59 g5! hxg5+ 60 ♔xg5 ♖xh3 61 ♔f4 ♔f7 62 ♔e5 ♔e7 63 ♖d6! (the key move; the king is cut off along a file, and with the white pawn on c5 it is a win) 63...♖h5+ 64 ♔d4 ♖h1 65 ♔d5 ♖a1 66 ♔c6 ♖a6+ 67 ♔c7 ♖a5 68 ♖d7+ ♔e6 69 c6 ♖a7+ 70 ♔c8 ♖a6 71 ♔b7 ♖a4 72 ♖d3 ♖b4+ 73 ♔c8 ♖b1 74 c7 ♖h1 75 ♖b3 ♖c1 76 ♔b7, etc.

B



55 ... ♖c3+

* * * *

56 ♔e4

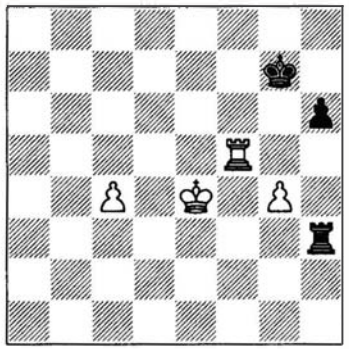
2 points. This is much simpler than the winning idea of the previous note.

56 ... ♖xh3

* * * *

57 ♖f5 *(D)*

3 points. It is essential to cut off the black king.



57 ... ♔g6

* * * *

58 ♔d5

1 point.

58 ... ♖d3+

* * * *

59 ♔e5

1 point. There is also 1 point for 59 ♔c5.

59 ... ♖g3

* * * *

60 ♖f4

2 points.

60 ... ♔g5

* * * *

61 ♖e4

1 point. There are 2 bonus points if you saw this idea as early as move 57, as Black could have tried 57...♖g3, after which the simplest would have been 58 ♖f4 ♔g6 59 ♔d5 ♔g5 60 ♖e4, with a similar win to that in the game.

61 ... ♖c3

* * * *

62 ♔d5

1 point.

1-0

The win is trivial. With the black king cut off, the c-pawn promenades home undisturbed.

Evaluation scheme

106-123	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
86-105	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
66-85	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
46-65	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
31-45	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-30	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 13

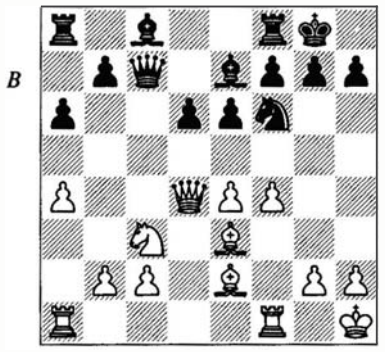
It is very frustrating to lose a game without having a clue as to what went wrong. This is exactly what happened for GM Sune Berg Hansen in this game. He went as far as to say that he regarded it as one of the very best games of 1999.

You are Black and we begin after White's 12th move.

S.B. Hansen – Cu. Hansen
Helsingør 1999
Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘c6 5 ♘c3 ♕c7 6 ♗e2 a6 7 0-0 ♘f6 8 ♔h1 ♗e7 9 f4 d6 10 a4 0-0 11 ♗e3 ♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 *(D)*

I will not delve too much into the opening, a main-line Scheveningen, except to say that Black's set-up is not the most common. Usually, Black does not exchange on d4 so early and instead prefers 11...♖e8.



* * * *

12 ... ♗d7

2 points. There are also 2 points for 12...e5, which leads to a more open position.

13 e5

* * * *

13 ... ♘e8

2 points. At first sight this is not a very agreeable retreat but in fact it is the only reasonable move. No points for 13...dxe5 14 fxe5 ♘e8, which may or may not lead to the same type of position as in the game, but with the major difference that White has more options.

14 ♗f2

I know from personal experience exactly how difficult it is for White to find a good plan at this stage. The danger lies in ending up with an isolated pawn on e5 without having any attacking chances. It is true that Black's pieces are rather clumsily placed for the moment but there is a fairly simple solution to this problem, as we shall discover in the game. The point of 14 ♗f2 is to prepare a retreat-square for the queen if a black rook comes to the d-file. 14 ♘e4 ♗c6 15 ♗d3 ♖d8 16 ♕c3 is another attempt to solve this problem but then 16...♖c8! is strong. In Klovans-Hall, 2nd Bundesliga 1997/8 White ended up on the receiving end in a very brief encounter: 17 ♗d4 ♕d7!? 18 ♕b3?! (18 exd6 is a better chance, but 18...♗xd6! is still very pleasant for Black) 18...dxe5 19 ♗xe5 f6 20 ♗c3? ♗d5 21 ♕b6 f5 22 ♘g5 ♗c5 23 ♕a5 b6 24 ♕xa6 ♘c7 0-1.

* * * *

14 ... ♗c6

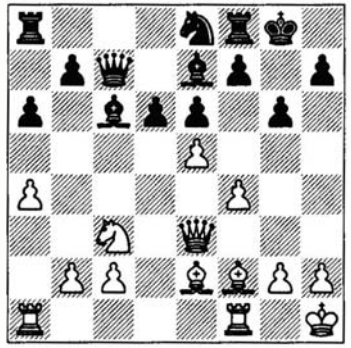
1 point; also take a bonus point if this was your intended idea when playing 12...♗d7. This diagonal is meant for the bishop and from c6 it not only attacks White's kingside but also sometimes helps in preparing ...b5.

15 ♕e3

* * * *

15 ... g6 *(D)*

3 points. This is a key move in Black's set-up. There is also a point for 15...♖d8 or 15...dxe5 but the text-move is much more flexible.



16 ♗d3

* * * *

16 ... ♘g7

1 point. Also have 1 bonus point if this was your idea with 15...g6. The rooks are now reconnected and the knight might find a bright future from f5. Note that Black keeps the central tension to limit White's options, for an exd6 exchange is virtually always going to favour Black.

17 a5

This is a standard move. White gains space on the queenside and prevents Black from suddenly lashing out with ...b5.

* * * *

17 ... dxe5

2 points. Black has more or less completed his intended set-up. White's problem with the isolated pawn on e5 is that he is rarely able to utilize the e4-square because the pawn then hangs. No points for 17...d5?, which is strategically horrible as it boxes in Black's light-squared bishop and gives White a nice stronghold on the d4-square.

18 fxe5

* * * *

18 ... ♖ad8

2 points. Take 2 points as well if you wanted to play this on your previous move.

19 ♕e2

* * * *

19 ... ♖d7

2 points.

20 ♗b6

If White is going to bring his queen's rook into the game this is a necessary intermediate move. 20 ♗g3 would be good if White could somehow get time for ♗e4 afterwards but ♗g3 can always be answered by ...♘h5.

* * * *

20 ... ♕b8

2 points. 20...♕c8? is much worse as it does not maintain the pressure against e5.

21 ♖ae1

By reinforcing the e-pawn, White prepares to mobilize his queen.

* * * *

21 ... ♘f5

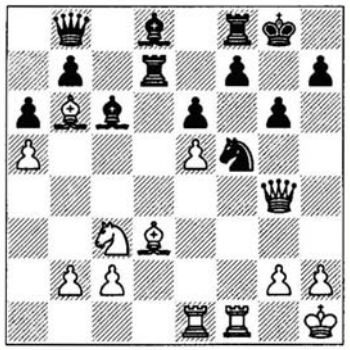
3 points. The knight that seemed so terribly placed on move 13 is suddenly one of Black's strongest pieces, controlling several good squares and effectively blocking the f-file.

22 ♕g4

After 22 ♗xf5, White would obtain a slight initiative in the event of 22...exf5 23 e6 fxe6 24 ♕xe6+ ♖f7 25 ♖d1, but Black would play the stronger 22...gxf5!. It is a misconception that this would weaken Black's kingside. Rather it helps Black in generating pressure against g2 by opening the g-file.

* * * *

22 ... ♗d8 *(D)*



3 points. Black continues to pose problems for White. After an exchange of the dark-squared bishops, White ends up with a couple of weak pawns. There are 2 points if you chose ...♗d8 on your last move, but collect 3 points if you wanted to play it in a slightly more accurate way, by inserting first 21...♗h4 22 ♖d1, and only then 22...♗d8.

23 ♗e4

* * * *

23 ... ♗xb6

2 points. I am not awarding any points for 23...♗xe4?! 24 ♘xe4 ♕xe5 even if you saw that after 25 ♘c5 Black actually has 25...♖d4!. Play may then proceed 26 ♖xe5 ♖xg4 27 ♘d7 ♗xb6, and after 28 ♘f6+ ♔g7 29 ♘xg4 ♗d4 30 ♖e2 ♗xb2 31 ♖b1 ♗c3 32 ♖xb7 ♖d8 it is not clear that Black is worse. However, things would be far from settled in the event of 28 axb6! ♖h4! 29 ♘xf8! ♘g3+ 30 ♔g1 ♘xf1 31 ♘d7 ♘d2 32 ♖c5, when White seems to get to the b-pawn. This might in fact turn out to be very dangerous for Black and there is no reason to take risks like this.

24 axb6

3 bonus points if you saw 24 ♗xc6 and intended to meet it with 24...♖d4 25 ♕f3 and then 25...♗c7 26 ♗xb7 ♗xe5 or 25...♗xa5 26 ♗xb7 ♖b4 27 ♗xa6 ♖xb2, with a clear advantage for Black in either case.

* * * *

24 ... ♗xe4

1 point.

25 ♕xe4

* * * *

25 ... ♖d4

2 points. 25...♖fd8 (1 point) is also sensible.

26 ♕f3

* * * *

26 ... h5

3 points. Black plays this just in case White decides to lash out with g4. Take 2 points if you chose ...h5 on your last move. Note the difficulties

White has in mobilizing his pieces, due to the isolated pawn on e5.

27 ♖e4

* * * *

27 ... ♖fd8

2 points.

28 ♕f4

* * * *

28 ... ♕c8

3 points. This strong move counteracts White's idea of playing 29 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 30 ♘e4, which would now lose a pawn to 30...♕xc2.

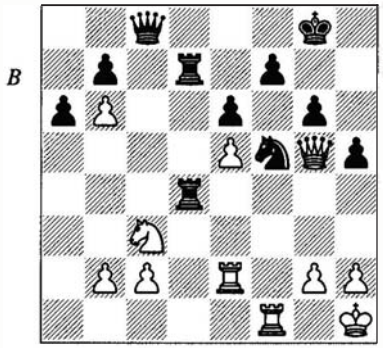
29 ♕g5

* * * *

29 ... ♖8d7

3 points.

30 ♖e2 *(D)*



* * * *

30 ... ♕d8

3 points. 2 bonus points if you had the tripling on the d-file in mind when you played 29...♖8d7.

31 ♕xd8+

* * * *

31 ... ♖xd8

1 point.

32 ♘e4

* * * *

32 ... ♖b4

2 points. Note how consistently Black has been aiming for this ending, which is an easy win in view of his superiority over the d-file and White's weaknesses on e5 and b6.

33 c3

* * * *

33 ... ♖xb6

1 point.

34 g3

* * * *

34 ... ♖d3

2 points. This is the most energetic move.

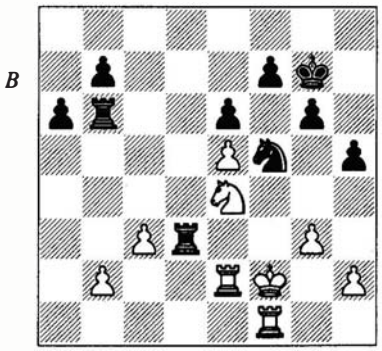
35 ♔g1

* * * *

35 ... ♔g7

2 points.

36 ♔f2 *(D)*



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36 ... ♖b5

2 points. Feel free to add the full total of 6 points for the previous 3 moves if you decided to play them in some other order. White is completely tied up and must still watch the weak e5-pawn.

37 ♘f6

* * * *

37 ... a5

2 points.

38 ♖a1

* * * *

38 ... b6

1 point. Black can safely take his time to improve his queenside.

39 ♖a4

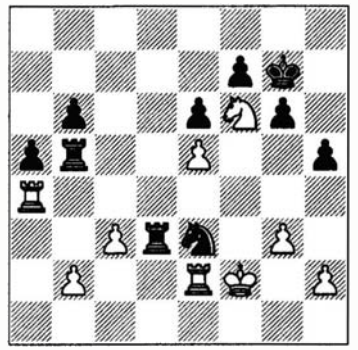
* * * *

39 ... ♘e3 *(D)*

4 points. The simplest. 2 points for 39...♖c5, which is also good.

40 ♖d4

Or 40 ♖xe3 ♖xe3, when both 41 ♔xe3 ♖xe5+ 42 ♘e4 f5 and 41 ♘xh5+ gxh5 42 ♔xe3 ♖xb2 are trivial wins for Black.



* * * *

40 ... ♖xd4

1 point.

41 cxd4

* * * *

41 ... ♘c4

2 points. Or 41...♘d1+ (2 points).

0-1

Black wins a second pawn.

Evaluation scheme

62-69	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
54-61	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
46-53	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
36-45	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
26-35	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-25	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

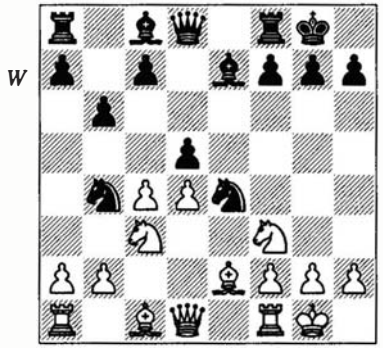
Game 14

The Petroff is a tough nut to crack these days, and GM Artur Yusupov has been one of the leading experts in this opening. In this game GM Hraček shows his opinion of how to handle the Petroff and convincingly outplays Yusupov.

You are White and we begin after Black's 10th move.

Hraček – Yusupov
Bundesliga 1999/00
Petroff Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♗d3 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 c4 ♘b4 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 ♘c3 b6 *(D)*



This is a very topical line in the Petroff Defence. Black's last move is a completely new try in this position. Usually, Black would develop his bishop on f5, but with 10...b6, Black anticipates an opening of the a8-h1 diagonal and intends to place his bishop more actively on b7.

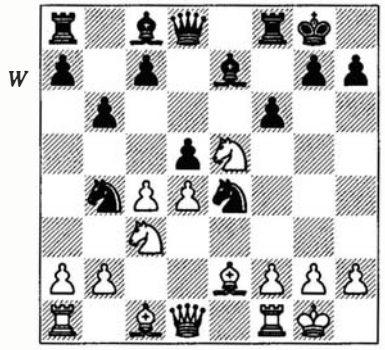
* * * *

11 ♘e5

2 points. This is White's most aggressive move, threatening to play 12 a3, as the b4-knight has been denied its retreat-square. The immediate 11 a3 and 11 ♗f4 are both sensible alternatives and also worthy of 2 points.

11 ... ♗b7

What would you have done in reply to 11...f6 (D)?



11...f6 would be ill-advised, since it merely weakens Black's kingside. White could try to punish it with 12 a3 but Black should be doing OK after 12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 fxe5 14 axb4 exd4. However, the weakening is felt more after the simple 12 ♘d3!. Indeed, Black is then struggling to find a sensible reply. 12...c6 is one idea but Black is in trouble after 13 ♘xb4! ♗xb4 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♕a4. 2 points if you intended 12 ♘d3!.

* * * *

12 ♖e1

3 points. White aims to get the most out of his position, and for the moment

hopes to avoid playing a3. 12 a3 (2 points) isn't a bad move, though, and was indeed played only a few days before this game, in Shirov-Anand, Linares 2000, which continued 12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 ♘c6 14 ♗f3 ♘a5 with a roughly equal position. The text-move is probably a prepared improvement by Hraček.

It is worth noting that White gains no advantage whatsoever after 12 ♘xe4 dxe4 13 a3, since Black simply replies 13...♘c6 14 ♘xc6 ♗xc6, when the e-pawn can be supported by ...f5. White's d-pawn will be vulnerable if it stays on d4, and if it moves to d5, Black can play for a ...c6 break if required, or simply try to generate play on the dark squares.

12 ... dxc4

* * * *

13 ♗xc4

2 points.

13 ... ♘xc3

* * * *

14 bxc3

1 point.

14 ... ♘d5 *(D)*

* * * *

15 ♕f3

2 points. This is a very good move for several reasons. Two of the most important are that Black's knight is pinned and hence cannot move, while from f3 the queen also attacks f7, and thus in some positions prevents Black from improving his position with ...♖e8. 15 ♕h5 (1 point) is another sensible move, with roughly the same intentions as the text-move, but because it doesn't attack Black's d5-knight directly, Black might jump at the opportunity and try 15...c5.

15 ... c6

* * * *

16 ♗b3

3 points.

16 ... ♗d6

* * * *

17 ♗c2

3 points. Take 2 bonus points if this was your idea with 16 ♗b3. White is looking for an ideal attacking position and with the a2-g8 diagonal well blocked it is logical for White to transfer his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal. Of course, White would have liked to play 16 ♗d3 but due to 16...♘xc3, he had to take a longer route.

17 ... ♕c7

* * * *

18 ♕h3

2 points. White has now achieved his ideal set-up. There are 2 bonus points if you had this positioning of the queen in mind on move 15.

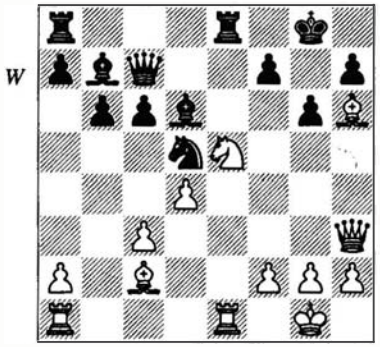
18 ... g6

* * * *

19 ♗h6

2 points. Finally, White completes development. In positions of this type, the dark-squared bishop is often developed very late. Here, White cleverly waited to develop the bishop until he had provoked ...g6.

19 ... ♖fe8 *(D)*



* * * *

20 c4

3 points.

20 ... ♗xe5

* * * *

21 dxe5

2 points.

21 ... ♘b4

It is essential to have a few variations worked out at this stage, so you can subtract your points on move 20, unless you had taken 21...♖xe5 into account. On the other hand, if you did consider 21...♖xe5, and worked out the correct reply, you can take 3 bonus points. White should reply 22 cxd5 ♖h5 23 ♕g3 ♕xg3 24 fxg3 (or 24 hxg3) 24...♖xh6 25 ♖e7, when he appears to be winning. For example, 25...♖b8 is met by 26 d6.

* * * *

22 ♗f5

2 points. 22 ♗b3 and 22 ♗a4 are also strong. 2 points for either move. The point is that Black cannot take on e5, and if White is allowed the time to support e5 with f4, he would be much better. Furthermore, Black must constantly be alert to the cruel mating idea ♗g5-f6 followed by ♕h6.

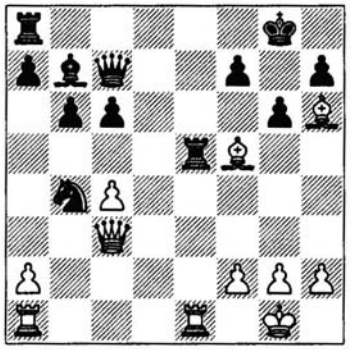
22 ... ♖xe5

22...c5 would be met by 23 f4. Then, for example, 23...♖ad8 24 ♖ad1 ♖xd1 25 ♖xd1 ♖d8 26 ♗d7! ♗c6 27 e6 wins for White.

* * * *

23 ♕c3 *(D)*

2 points. This is the only move to justify White's play. 2 bonus points if you had seen this idea on move 20.



23 ... ♖ae8

* * * *

24 f4

2 points.

24 ... ♖xe1+

* * * *

25 ♖xe1

1 point.

25 ... ♖xe1+

* * * *

26 ♕xe1

1 point.

26 ... ♕d8 *(D)*

* * * *

27 ♕e5

2 points. 27 ♕c3 (2 points) is also good.

27 ... f6

* * * *

28 ♕e6+

2 points.

28 ... ♔h8

* * * *

29 ♕f7

4 points. 29 h3 and 29 h4 are excellent alternatives (4 points for either), as they provide the white king with cover from checks, and so ♕f7 will force mate in short order.

29 ... ♕d4+

White easily escapes the checks – I trust that you have seen how. The conclusion to the game was:

30 ♔f1 ♕d1+ 31 ♔f2 ♕d2+ 32 ♔g3 ♕e3+ 33 ♔h4 ♕f2+ 34 ♔h3 1-0

Evaluation scheme

43-52	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
35-42	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
29-34	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
22-28	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
16-21	Average Club Player (1400-1800)

Game 15

The good old Queen's Gambit Declined is generally regarded as a little boring but has been kept as a solid weapon in many strong players' opening arsenals.

In the last few years, Nigel Short, has used it as his main reply to 1 d4 and has entertained us with many fine wins. In the following game, Short launches a terrific attack, which one wouldn't imagine could arise from a Tartakower Queen's Gambit.

You are Black and we begin after White's 12th move.

Illescas – Short
Pamplona 1999/00
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 ♘c3 ♗e7 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8 ♗e2 ♗b7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 10 cxd5 exd5 11 0-0 ♕e7 12 ♕b3 *(D)*

B

* * * *

12 ... ♖d8

3 points.

13 ♖fd1

* * * *

13 ... c6

1 point. Also 1 point if you chose to play this on the previous move, i.e. 12...c6. 12...♖d8 may look superfluous at first sight since Black has to follow up with 13...c6 anyway so that he can complete his development. However, 12...♖d8 intends active play with ...c5, and hence makes White place his rook more passively. White could also have chosen a set-up with his queen's rook on d1 and the other on e1, aiming for a quick e4.

14 ♗f1

* * * *

14 ... ♘a6

3 points. This is the right route for the knight. 14...♘d7 (1 point) is an alternative but then one point of the flexible 14 ♗f1 becomes clear, since White begins assaulting the queenside with a4-a5. 14...♗c8 (1 point) is also possible; then White obtained a slight edge with 15 g3 ♗g4 16 ♗g2 ♘d7 17 ♖ac1 ♖ac8 18 ♘e2 ♘f8 19 h3 ♗f5 20 ♘f4 g6 21 ♕a4 ♗g7 22 b4 in Piket-Beliavsky, Bugojno 1999.

15 ♖d2

* * * *

15 ... ♘c7

2 points.

16 a4

White may also play 15 a4 but then Black can try 15...♕b4.

* * * *

16 ... ♘e6

2 points. Black stays solid. From e6 the knight assists a ...c5 break, with which Black is usually very happy. Another route is 16...♘e8 (1 point), intending ...♘d6 with target squares on c4, e4 and f5. There is also 16...♖ab8 (1 point), which is another way to prepare ...c5; then even 17 a5 can be met by 17...c5!?. However, the immediate 16...c5!? (2 points) is feasible. The reason is, as Short explains, that White's last move denies his queen an important retreat-square; thus after 17 dxc5 bxc5 18 ♕xb7 ♗xc3 19 bxc3 ♖db8 20 ♕c6 ♖b6 White must give up his queen. The resulting position arising after 21 ♕xa8+ ♘xa8 22 ♖xd5 ♘c7 is difficult to assess. Material is roughly level, but Black is more active and can more easily improve the positions of his pieces.

Although all the candidate moves have something to be said for them, I prefer Short's choice, which is the most solid and improves the position of his worst-placed piece.

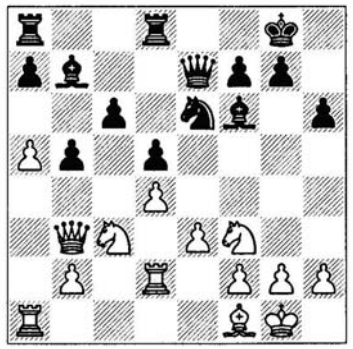
17 a5

* * * *

17 ... b5 *(D)*

2 points.

W



18 ♕a2

This looks very strange at first sight. If White could combine 18 a6 with putting a knight on b4, he would be better, but it seems impossible to implement this plan because the a6-pawn is always under attack, and after 18...♗c8, sometimes Black can even contemplate ...♖b8-b6 to collect the pawn. The text-move has another idea in mind, namely to put a pawn on b4, which would essentially stop ...c5.

* * * *

18 ... a6

2 points. This is a very natural move: Black protects his b-pawn and thus prepares ...c5.

19 ♖c1

* * * *

19 ... c5

2 points. This is as logical as it is strong. There is no real need to prepare this break, although Black could have done that by 19...♖ac8 (1 point).

20 dxc5

The strategic threat of ...c4 is very awkward.

* * * *

20 ... d4

4 points. There was nothing very wrong with 20...♘xc5 but 20...d4 is one of those moves that separates ordinary players from those of Short's calibre. The b7-bishop, which so often looks more or less dead in the early part of these Tartakowers, now suddenly wakes up with a very powerful effect.

21 ♘xd4

* * * *

21 ... ♗xd4

2 points. This is the main point of Black's last move and needed to have been foreseen. The more 'natural' 21...♘xd4 is not good enough as the bishop is clearly less effective than the knight in the coming attack.

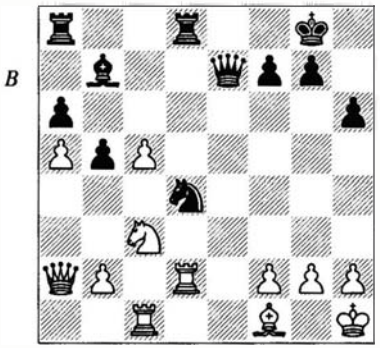
22 exd4

* * * *

22 ... ♘xd4

2 points. 22...♖xd4 (1 point) is not bad, but the text-move is more forcing.

23 ♔h1 *(D)*



* * * *

23 ... ♘f3

4 points. This is the main point of Black's 19th and 20th moves. White has major problems defending his kingside, firstly due to his unprotected rooks, while the queen is also completely out of play on a2. 23...♕xc5 (1 point) is not bad but rather misses the point. White would reply 24 ♖cd1, pinning the knight and even though Black is OK after 24...♕e5, he has thrown away all his initiative. 23...b4 (1 point), intending the tactic 24 ♘e2 ♗xg2+ 25 ♗xg2 ♘xe2, deserves some attention too. White should probably play 24 ♕c4! instead, when the position after 24...bxc3 25 ♖xd4 cxb2 26 ♖b1 ♖dc8 27 ♖xb2 ♖xc5 looks at least OK for Black, but again he has thrown away his advantage.

24 ♖xd8+

The suspicious-looking 24 ♖dc2 is probably White's best move here. Of course there is always a repetition with 24...♘d4 25 ♖d2 ♘f3, but does Black have more? Perhaps 24...♕f6, and if 25 ♘e2 ♗e4 26 ♖c3 ♘d2!? 27 f3 ♗d3! White is in trouble.

* * * *

24 ... ♖xd8

1 point.

25 c6

* * * *

25 ... ♗xc6

1 point.

26 ♘e2 *(D)*

* * * *

26 ... ♕h4

3 points. A very powerful move.

27 gxf3

* * * *

27 ... ♕xf2

2 points. 27 h3 would have been met with the same reply. Incidentally, 27...♗xf3+ (2 points) is also good.

28 ♘f4

2 bonus points if you had seen either of the two winning plans after 28 ♖xc6 ♕xf1+ 29 ♘g1:

a) 29...♖d1 30 ♖g6 ♕xf3+ 31 ♖g2 ♕e4! and now White's only way to delay mate is to give away his queen by 32 ♕a1.

b) 29...♖d2 30 ♖g6 ♕f2 and Black mates quickly.

The latter is faster but, to quote Short, "not half as elegant".

* * * *

28 ... ♗xf3+

2 points.

29 ♗g2

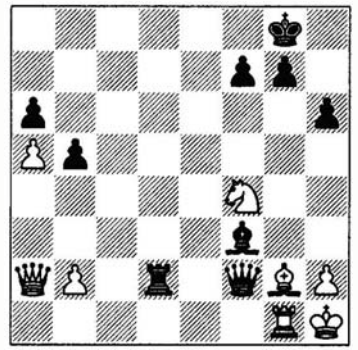
* * * *

29 ... ♖d2

2 points. Of course, there is nothing wrong with playing the last two moves in reverse order. 29...♕d2 (1 point) 30 ♖f1 ♕xf4 31 ♗xf3 ♖d1! is good enough but not quite as effective.

30 ♖g1 *(D)*

If 30 ♖c8+ ♔h7 31 ♕b1+ g6 32 ♕g1, Black has 32...♖d1!.



* * * *

30 ... ♗e4

3 points. Also 3 points for any other retreat along this diagonal (except d5!).

0-1

Black wins the knight on f4, and therefore White decided to throw in the towel. An excellent attacking game from Short.

Evaluation scheme

40-45	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
35-39	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
29-34	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
22-28	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
16-21	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-15	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

Game 16

The Grünfeld rivals the King's Indian as the main kingside fianchetto opening in reply to 1 d4, and GM Peter Leko is one of its foremost experts. In this game he beats the solid Fianchetto Variation.

You are Black and we begin after White's 9th move.

P. Nikolić – Leko
Wijk aan Zee 2000
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘f3 ♗g7 4 g3 d5 5 ♗g2 dxc4 6 ♕a4+ ♘fd7

Black has a number of alternatives at this stage but the text-move is the main preference amongst the elite. It does move the same piece for the second time in the opening but this is no drawback, for White is doing the same thing with his queen. More importantly, it gives scope to the g7-bishop and directs the knight towards the queenside, preparing future pressure on that front. It also keeps the option of playing ...♘c6 with pressure against the d4-pawn, which would not be possible after either 6...♘bd7 or 6...c6; the latter is Black's main alternative and has a solid reputation but is a little passive.

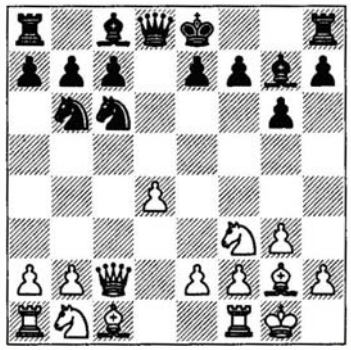
7 0-0 ♘c6 8 ♕xc4 ♘b6 9 ♕c2 *(D)*

* * * *

9 ... 0-0

2 points. This is clearly the safest. There are also 2 points if you decided to play 9...♘xd4 10 ♘xd4 ♕xd4 but after 11 ♕xc7 you would have to find

B



11...♕c4! with a roughly balanced position.

I will award 1 point for the risky pawn-grab 9...♗xd4?!, but only because it does not lose right away! Such a move is rarely a wise practical decision because even if there is no clear refutation, it involves too many risks. A possible continuation is 10 ♖d1 ♗f5(!) 11 e4 ♗xe4 12 ♕xe4 ♗xf2+ 13 ♔xf2 ♕xd1 14 ♘c3, when White has a strong initiative to compensate for the slight material deficit.

10 ♖d1

* * * *

10 ... ♗g4

1 point. It is very logical to exert pressure on the d4-pawn by attacking the f3-knight. You can also add 1 point if you chose ...♗g4 on your previous move.

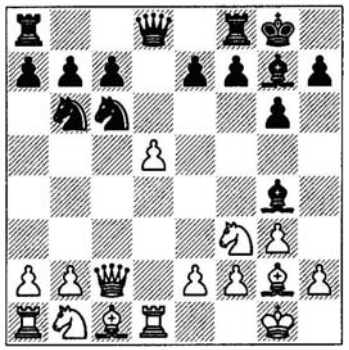
Another possibility for which I will give 1 point is 10...♗f5, intending to provoke the weakening 11 e4. After 11...♗g4 12 d5, the continuation 12...♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♘d4 14 ♕d3 c6 leaves the position roughly equal. If Black is not happy with this, he can

even play more dynamically by means of 12...♘e5!? 13 ♘bd2 c6.

11 e3

What would you do against 11 d5 (D)?

B



In fact, 11 d5?! is probably pushing things a little too far. Black has the excellent reply 11...♘xd5! (other moves favour White due to his space advantage). White can now try to embarrass the knight in a number of different ways but none of them succeed:

a) 12 e4? ♗xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♘db4 is more or less winning for Black, as most queen moves are met simply by 14...♘d4!.

b) 12 ♘e1? ♘d4 13 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♕e4 ♘f6 defends everything.

c) 12 ♘c3 ♘db4 13 ♕e4 ♕c8 and Black escapes the danger, while preparing to unsettle the white queen.

d) 12 ♕b3 ♗e6! (12...e6?! 13 e4 ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 ♘d4 15 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 16 exd5 is better for White) 13 ♕xb7 (not 13 e4? ♘db4! 14 ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 15 ♕a4 b5! 16 ♕xb5 ♖d1+ 17 ♗f1 ♖xc1 −+) 13...♕e8! 14 ♘g5 ♖b8 15 ♕a6 ♘db4 (15...♘cb4!? 16 ♕c4 ♕a4 17 ♕b3 ♕a6 is an interesting alternative) 16 ♕a4 (16 ♗xc6 ♘xc6 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 fails to solve all White's problems as he is still lagging behind in development) 16...♘d4 17 ♕xe8 ♖fxe8 with a very active position for Black. True, White's structure is preferable but this does not really matter if Black wins in the middlegame.

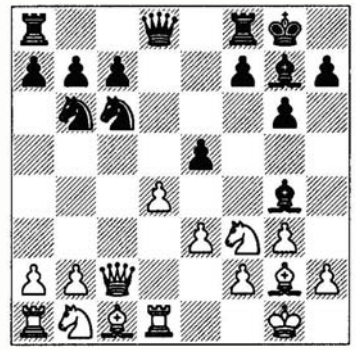
If you had anticipated most of the above tactics and were prepared to meet 11 d5?! with 11...♘xd5 12 ♕b3 ♗e6! you can add 4 bonus points.

* * * *

11 ... e5 *(D)*

2 points. Another sensible option is 11...♕d7 (1 point) but Black should play energetically to try to exploit his development advantage.

W



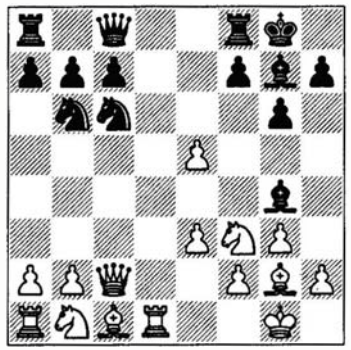
12 dxe5

* * * *

12 ... ♕c8 *(D)*

3 points. Black would probably also regain the pawn with 12...♕e7 (1 point) but the text-move is much better as it prevents White from playing h3, which

would be slightly annoying because it would displace the bishop from the very active square g4.



13 ♖e1

A fine move. Black was threatening 13...♘xe5, so White removes the rook from the pin.

* * * *

13 ... ♖d8

3 points. Leko replies equally well by keeping his opponent under pressure. 13...♘xe5 (1 point) would probably be chosen by most lesser mortals but eases White's defence after 14 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♘c3.

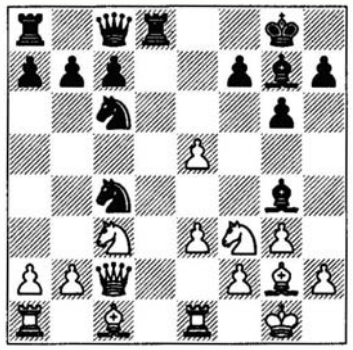
14 ♘c3

* * * *

14 ... ♘c4 *(D)*

3 points. The alternatives 14...♘b4, 14...♘xe5, 14...♗xe5!? and 14...♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♘xe5 are all very good and deserve 1 point but, as is often the case, the threat is stronger than its execution, and by adding a further piece to the attack Black strengthens the pressure on White.

15 ♘d5



Without this move it would have been very difficult to find a useful move for White.

* * * *

15 ... ♖xd5

2 points. Looking at the position a few moves ago, Black should not be unhappy with exchanging the b6-knight for White's c3-knight, so this move suggests itself. 15...♗xf3 (1 point) 16 ♗xf3 ♘4xe5 is the alternative but I would, like Leko, keep the bishop as long as possible.

16 ♕xc4

* * * *

16 ... ♖d8

2 points. Blackcan play 16...♗e6 (1 point) but retreating the bishop is already a small sign of Black moving backwards.

17 ♕b3

17 ♘g5?! ♘xe5 18 ♕b3 c6, followed by ...h6, gives Black a very good position, but according to Leko White should try 17 ♕f4! ♖e8 18 ♗d2 ♘xe5 19 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♕b4 with an equal position after 20...c6 21 ♗c3 or 20...c5 21 ♕a3.

* * * *

17 ... ♗e6

1 point.

18 ♕c3

* * * *

18 ... ♗g4

1 point.

19 ♕b3

* * * *

19 ... ♖b8

3 points. You can have the full 5 points for moves 17-19 if you chose ...♖b8 at move 17. Obviously, Black should not be happy with a repetition, and indeed the repetition was perhaps not the best decision, because White could have considered avoiding it with 18 ♕a4!?. 19...♖b8 is strong prophylaxis against the pressure towards b7, and Black is now more or less ready to recoup the pawn on e5.

20 a3

* * * *

20 ... ♕d7

2 points. Taking control of the d-file is a logical way to maintain the pressure; in particular, the d3-square looks vulnerable. 20...♗xf3 21 ♗xf3 ♘xe5 (1 point) is also possible but then 22 ♗g2 ♕g4 23 e4 looks just about OK for White.

21 ♖b1

This is not really imperative. Perhaps 21 e4 is a better defence.

* * * *

21 ... ♘xe5

1 point.

22 ♘xe5

* * * *

22 ... ♗xe5

1 point.

23 e4

* * * *

23 ... ♗e6 *(D)*

2 points. Black starts playing on the queenside light squares that were weakened by White's 20th move. Another idea is 23...♗d1!? (2 points) with similar ideas as in the game but it takes the c2-square away from White's queen.

24 ♕c2

* * * *

24 ... ♕b5

2 points. Black is planning to play ...♗b3. With this in mind, an interesting alternative is 24...♗a2 25 ♖a1 ♕e6! (2 points).

25 b4

* * * *

25 ... ♗c4

2 points. Owing to the threat of 26...♗d3, this forces an exchange of the light-squared bishops, which is strategically desirable for Black, since White is weak on the light squares.

26 ♗f1

* * * *

26 ... ♗xf1

1 point.

27 ♖xf1

* * * *

27 ... ♕d3

2 points. The endgame is awkward for White due to his queenside weaknesses. 27...♖d3 (2 points) is a reasonable alternative if one is not really 'into endgames' and also seems to maintain an advantage. Both 28 ♗b2 ♖bd8 and 28 a4 ♕d7 29 ♗g5 ♕d4!? look slightly in Black's favour.

28 ♕xd3

* * * *

28 ... ♖xd3

1 point.

29 b5

It is easy to follow the reasoning behind this move as it intends to place the pawns on light squares and prepares to activate the rook via the 4th rank, thus keeping the bishop on c3 for protection of the a3-pawn. However, it turns out that the weakening of the queenside that the move involves is more important than whatever good it does. White should have stayed calm with 29 ♔g2, with only a slight disadvantage.

* * * *

29 ... ♖e8

2 points. This strong move threatens to win a pawn with 30...♗d6.

30 ♖b4

* * * *

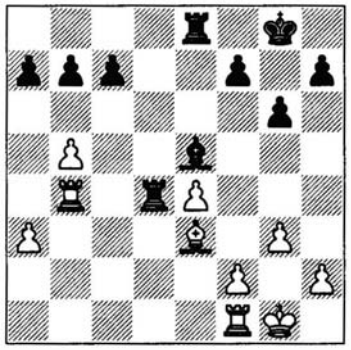
30 ... ♖d4

2 points. This is accurate play from Black, as he forces the exchange of White's only active piece.

31 ♖xd4

What did you have in mind against 31 ♗e3 (D)?

B



3 points for 31...♖xb4 32 axb4 ♗d6! (only 1 point for 32...b6, which allows White to gain valuable space with 33 f4! ♗d6 34 e5), which keeps a large advantage, e.g. 33 ♗c5 (33 ♖a1 ♖xe4 34 ♖xa7 b6 35 ♗d2 f5 ∓) 33...♖xe4 34 ♖a1 ♗e5! 35 ♖xa7 b6 ∓.

* * * *

31 ... ♗xd4

1 point.

32 ♖e1

* * * *

32 ... f5

2 points.

33 ♗f4

* * * *

33 ... ♖xe4

3 points. 33...c5 (or 33...c6) 34 bxc6 bxc6 (1 point) looks less clear in view of 35 ♖c1! (35 e5?! ♔f7 36 ♔g2 ♔e6 37 ♔f3 ♔d5 is good for Black) 35...♖xe4 36 ♖xc6 ♖e1+ 37 ♔g2 ♖e2 38 ♗e3! ♗xe3 39 ♔f3 ♖xf2+ 40 ♔xe3 ♖xh2 41 ♖a6, with excellent drawing chances for White.

34 ♖xe4

34 ♖c1! is probably a better chance for White. 3 bonus points if you had expected this and intended to meet it with 34...♖e7!, and then, for example, 35 ♗xc7 (35 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 36 ♗xc7 ♔f7 is very good for Black, since his king gets to the queenside first) 35...♗b2 ∓. 34...♗e5 (2 points) looks less convincing in view of 35 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 36 ♖xc7 ♖xb5 37 h4 with reasonable drawing chances for White.

* * * *

34 ... fxe4

1 point.

35 ♗xc7

* * * *

35 ... ♔f7

1 point.

36 ♔f1

* * * *

36 ... ♔e6

1 point.

37 ♔e2

* * * *

37 ... ♔d5

1 point.

38 ♗f4

* * * *

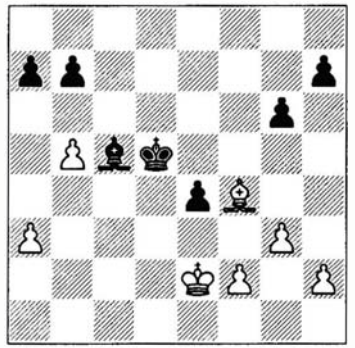
38 ... ♗c5 *(D)*

4 points. Excellent technique by Black. 38...♔c4? throws away the win, due to 39 ♗e3! ♗xe3 40 ♔xe3 ♔xb5 41 ♔xe4 ♔c5 42 f4 b5 43 g4 a5 44 f5 gxf5+ 45 gxf5 ♔d6 46 ♔d4 with a drawn king and pawn ending.

39 a4

Now 39 ♗e3 is met by 39...♗xa3 40 ♗xa7 ♗c5! 41 ♗b8 (41 ♗xc5 ♔xc5 42 ♔e3 ♔xb5 43 ♔xe4 ♔c4 and Black wins) 41...♔c4 42 f3 exf3+ 43 ♔xf3 ♔xb5 with a likely win for Black.

W



* * * *

39 ... ♔c4

1 point.

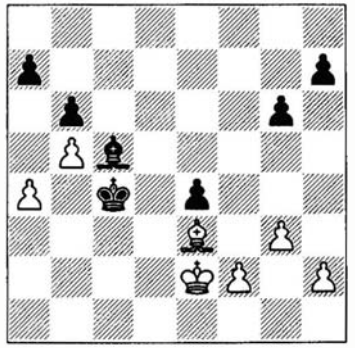
40 ♗e3

* * * *

40 ... b6 *(D)*

4 points. Again Black finds the most accurate move. 40...♗xe3 (1 point) is also good but after 41 ♔xe3 ♔b4 42 ♔xe4 ♔xa4 43 f4 ♔xb5 44 ♔d5! (44 g4? ♔c6 45 ♔e5 ♔d7 −+) 44...a5 45 g4 a4 46 f5 a3 47 f6 a2 48 f7 a1♕ 49 f8♕ White is still alive.

W



41 ♗d2

41 ♗xc5 bxc5 42 ♔e3 ♔b4 43 ♔xe4 ♔xa4 is not an option.

* * * *

41 ... ♔b3

1 point.

42 a5

* * * *

42 ... bxa5

1 point. 42...♔a4 and 42...♔c4 (both 1 point) are equally good.

43 ♗xa5

* * * *

43 ... ♔a4

1 point.

44 ♗d2

* * * *

44 ... ♔xb5

1 point.

45 f3

* * * *

45 ... exf3+

1 point.

46 ♔xf3

* * * *

46 ... ♗b4

1 point.

47 ♗c1

* * * *

47 ... a5

1 point. Also 1 point if you wanted to play 46...a5.

48 ♔g4

* * * *

48 ... a4

1 point.

49 ♔g5

* * * *

49 ... ♔c4

3 points. Not, of course, 49...a3? 50 ♗xa3! ♗xa3 51 ♔h6, when White draws.

50 ♔h6

* * * *

50 ... ♔d3

1 point. 50...♔b3 and 50...♔c3 (1 point for either) are just as effective.

0-1

Black wins easily by playing ...♔c2, ...a3-a2 and if White puts his bishop on the h8-a1 diagonal, Black interrupts this with ...♗c3.

Evaluation scheme

70-82	International Master or Grandmaster (2400+)
61-69	FIDE Master or National Master (2200-2400)
51-60	Internationally Rated Player (2000-2200)
41-50	Strong Club Player (1800-2000)
21-40	Average Club Player (1400-1800)
0-20	Lower Club or Social Player (below 1400)

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